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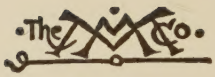
GEORGE LOUIS BEER

A TRIBUTE TO HIS LIFE AND WORK
IN THE MAKING OF HISTORY
AND THE MOULDING OF PUBLIC OPINION



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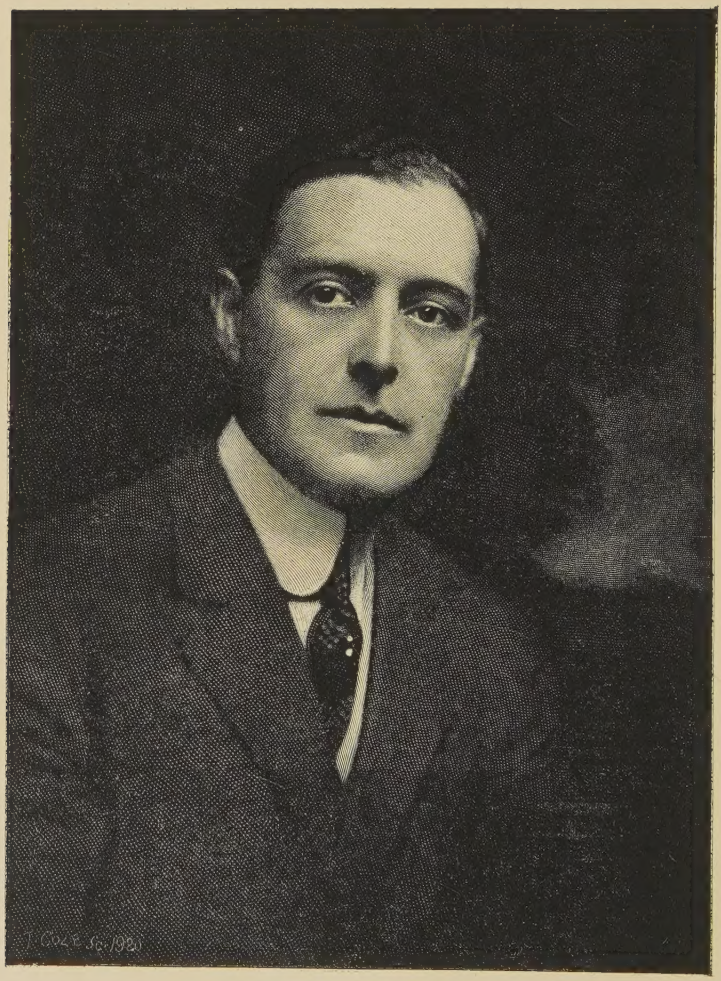

GEORGE LOUIS BEER

(From a woodcut by Timothy Cole made from a photograph)

GEORGE LOUIS BEER

A Tribute to His Life and Work in the Making of History and the Moulding of Public Opinion

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PART ONE
BIOGRAPHICAL

I

A FOREWORD

BY

Colonel E. M. HOUSE

When the world was in agony and men were hurrying hither and thither intent upon destroying one another I met by chance George Louis Beer.

Elihu Root and I had been dining with Sidney Brooks, who was then in New York, and Beer came in afterward. In the talk that followed I made assessment of the man and had no reason to change that judgment when later I came into more intimate touch with him at Paris and London.

I had not known him before except through his books, but from them I was prepared to find a man of calm and balanced judgment, qualities which characterized his service to his country in the making of the Peace. At a time when hate and suspicion were the ruling passions, it was refreshing to find a man so singularly detached from both, and one who could draw upon a rich historic background to aid him in forming opinions and conclusions regarding the existing chaotic conditions. He was silent when silence was a virtue, but when he spoke, he spoke as one in authority. He was a rare man—a man knowing both his talents and his limitations.

Beer had the English type of scholarship with a

literary flavor added to its breadth and accuracy. His was a mind that goes with leisureliness in working and thinking and that mellows in its outlook on men and affairs. He had had the advantage of contact with some of the chief pro-consuls of his day—pro-consuls of the Milner type, and he was able not only to explain the British Colonial System as it was intended to work, but to show how it actually worked, something quite different. We shall always regret that it was not given him to complete his purpose of writing an exhaustive history of the British Colonial policy, but what he has done has been done in a way that will make it unnecessary for the future historian to cover again the field of his researches.

The depth and accuracy of his work are recognized more fully in Great Britain than in the United States, for it is there that interest in the subject of colonial administration is greatest. It is there, too, that his contribution to the question of mandates is most appreciated. Whether the idea of bringing backward countries under the mandate of those nations best qualified to exercise it was original with Beer, I do not know, but it came to me first through a memorandum prepared by General Smuts. It was a new departure in colonial policy and seemed to point a way out of the tangle

into which the question of the disposition of the German Colonies had fallen. President Wilson seized upon it with enthusiasm and if his purpose had not been thwarted by the Senate of the United States, a new and more splendid era of colonial administration would have been inaugurated. For the first time a serious attempt was made by an association of nations to protect the natives of weak and undeveloped countries from the greed and caprices of their over-lords. Public opinion of the world was being invoked in order that these helpless peoples should not be unduly exploited solely for the profit of those exercising suzerainty over them. No nation, no matter how altruistic and humane, was to be the sole arbiter of their destinies.

When the Mandate Commission first met it was feared there might be pronounced disagreement among the delegates, and it was a delightful surprise to find a unanimous purpose to form the mandates solely for the protection, advancement and contentment of the natives. If there were any differences of opinion they were unselfish differences, and the record will show that only the welfare of the natives was in the minds of all.

Among those who gathered in London to make the conditions under which the mandates were to be exercised, there was none who had a more com-

plete knowledge of the subject with which we had to treat than George Louis Beer. In my opinion, it was the greatest contribution he made toward post-war settlements. A new trail was blazed and he was one of the foremost axemen. He knew better than any other the pitfalls to be avoided and he knew the paths along which experience had taught that it would be safe to go.

It was during those summer days at Sunderland House of the year 1919 that I came to know the fulness of his scholarship, the ripeness of his judgment and the selflessness of his purpose.

II

THE HISTORIAN

BY

CHARLES M. ANDREWS

Though in the biographical paragraphs which appeared in the various editions of *Who's Who in America,* Beer is designated an "historian," it is doubtful if, properly speaking, he can be classed as a member of that particular guild. Rather was he an economist, publicist, and student of affairs, who approached history because he was interested in historical backgrounds and was eager to discover, if he could, the starting points of the world's political and economic progress. He subscribed fully to the adage, *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,* and made use of it in one of his volumes as descriptive of the purposes which actuated him in his historical investigations. He turned to the past in order to explore the beginnings of those relationships and conditions that characterize the world of today, and he considered the study of such beginnings as a serious duty, incumbent on all who would comprehend the meaning of that with which they were concerned as responsible members of their community and state. He looked upon history not as a narrative, but as a science of the origins, connections, developments, and transformations of policies and systems, and whatever aspects

of it he needed to examine he approached, not with the lightheartedness of the dilettante but with the courage of the explorer facing a task of infinite difficulty. To him history was a subject to be chosen with reverence and mastered with effort, and he had no patience with those who turned to historical writing merely as a means of attracting the general reader or of catering to the amusement of the masses at large. His idea of what history is and what historical method should be is as far removed as possible from that expressed by the late President Roosevelt, in his well-known inaugural address on "History and Literature," for Beer would never have agreed that "unless one writes vividly one cannot write truthfully," or that picturesque narrative can ever suffice to teach the coming generation the truth of the past. His methods were those of the most exacting representative of the modern historical school and demanded both a critical and an exhaustive study of reliable sources of information and the maintenance of an attitude of objectivity and impartiality, which he would never have characterized as the "thrice blessed anchorage of the academic mind," as does the cynic in search of an epigram. He approached the facts wherever he found them without preconceived idea as to their meaning and without any

ready-made philosophy which he desired to establish; and building, as he did, upon the most substantial of foundations and with the most lasting of materials, his contributions have the merit of permanence. A publicist and economist by preference, he was yet an historian by instinct, temperament, and cultivation, and he treated the material that he gathered in a manner commanding the highest respect of the historical scholar.

While a student at Columbia University, more than thirty years ago, Beer came under the influence of three men, Professors Burgess, Seligman, and Osgood, who guided his thoughts and determined in a measure the direction of his efforts. Professor Burgess gave him his first lessons in political science and constitutional law, and the results of that instruction can be seen in many a passage of his more mature work. Professor Seligman introduced him to economic history and the history of economic doctrine, and emphasized especially the principle of relativity, which Beer adopted as his own and which became a determining factor in his work, influencing at all points his interpretation of the past. Professor Seligman was always in close personal touch with Beer, and aided him at every stage of his career, both during his college days and in succeeding years as well, urging

and encouraging him when the future looked doubtful and the outlook for a successful career as a scholar and historian seemed uncertain. Professor Osgood turned the attention of his pupil to the field of colonial history and trained him in the severe methods of investigation and presentation, characteristic of his own historical output. Just as Seligman was calling the older conception of mercantilism an "absurdity," so already in 1886 Osgood was calling the older interpretation of colonial history a "superstition," and in his first printed article on the subject struck the modern note regarding the relations between England and her colonies. He was almost the first of our historians to see that England, during the period of our colonial history, was expanding into a great maritime empire, and perhaps the very first to realize that an understanding of England's commercial policy was necessary for an adequate comprehension of our own colonial development. In his paper on "England and her Colonies," printed in 1886, we find the very phrase, "the English commercial policy toward America," which later became the title of Beer's essay written for the master's degree; and there can be no doubt as to whence came the suggestion upon which Beer acted in turning his attention to the

commercial aspects of our early relations with England.

It was in 1893 that Beer's essay, entitled *The Commercial Policy of England toward the American Colonies,* was published in the series of Columbia Studies in History, Economics and Public Law. This brief monograph of only one hundred and fifty pages was a remarkable work to be written by a young man only twenty years of age, for it has endured the test of nearly thirty years of use and even today gives the only complete treatment of a subject which up to that time had been strangely ignored by all students who had written on the colonial period. In it Beer displayed many of the qualities that characterize his later historical writings—thoroughness of investigation, a philosophical insight into the psychological and social aspects of human intercourse, and a desire first to describe the facts and then to draw from them what seemed to be the logical conclusions. What he wrote was as free from sentiment and patriotic bias as would be a legal treatise on maritime law, for he approached England's policy as something to be studied and explained, and not to be condemned as selfish and tyrannical according to the time-honored method customary in American historical literature. "In view of the prevalent philosophy of evolution,"

he says in his preface, "we should, before condemning the policy of any age, look not at its absolute, but at its relative efficiency. No institution can be condemned from the historical standpoint, if it is in advance of that which preceded. From the modern democratic standpoint, the absolute monarchy must be condemned as a form of state organization. But as regards liberty and the development of nationality the absolute monarchy was certainly a step in advance of feudal monarchy." Similarly, he contended, England's colonial policy, based on the mercantilist idea, was "a marked advance on the balance of bargain theory which preceded," even though it laid itself open to condemnation in the light of later ideas of *laissez faire* and free trade. To the men of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the mercantilist scheme was as true "as the theory of evolution or of diminishing returns to us." "It was the policy," he wrote, "of unconscious ignorance not of malice. History teaches us that ignorance disguised in the garments of truth has, quite as often as malice, caused the adoption of erroneous policies." Though it may be questioned whether this doctrine of "unconscious ignorance" is rightly to be applied to the case in point, inasmuch as mercantilism is justified of its works, no one will deny that the mental processes lying behind these

statements are of a high order for a young man just out of his teens.

Starting with the premise that all institutions and policies are the result of a process of growth and that the colonial policy of England was no exception to this rule, Beer traced in compact and well documented fashion the character and application of that policy from earliest times to the year 1774. In his method of presentation, he combined the chronological with the topical form of treatment, discussing in turn the beginnings before 1660, the navigation acts, the enumerated commodities, the restrictions on colonial manufactures, the bounty system, the Molasses Act, and the machinery set in motion to administer the acts of trade and to prevent smuggling and the breaking of the law. So brief an exposition was manifestly incomplete, and as a first and comparatively youthful effort, it contained utterances and opinions that the writer would have modified later had he ever had the opportunity to review the subject in its entirety in the light of the wealth of evidence that afterwards came into his hands. It is academic and a little oracular, but when one considers the difficulties of the subject and the range of search limited to the printed books of a college library, one is impressed with the

maturity of the mind that could face so serious an effort in a wholly unexplored field of history.

Beer was painfully aware of the imperfections of his first work, and early planned to rewrite it on a more extended scale. But ten years were to elapse before he was able to carry out his purpose. During the interval he married, engaged in business, and for the first four years lectured on European history at Columbia University. But teaching was never congenial to him, and he was not successful either as a teacher or a public speaker. He possessed few of the gifts of the orator, and always seemed to find it difficult to adapt his ideas to the mental capacity of the average college student. He gave up lecturing entirely in 1897; and such time as he could spare from the exactions of business he devoted to historical investigation. We have but one product of his pen during these years, a study of Cromwell's policy in its economic aspects, which was printed in two parts in the *Political Science Quarterly* for 1902. This study, also based on readily accessible printed materials, discloses a widening of his historical interests and a marked enlargement of his powers of philosophical interpretation, though his treatment suffers from the fact that he is still dealing with printed material only and has not yet felt the invigorating influence of

contact with the original documents that as yet lay largely unexamined and in unprinted form abroad. His method of handling his subject is still academic and his line of argument characterized by more hypothesis and speculation than he ever indulged in afterwards. Inevitably, therefore, his conclusions fail at times to carry conviction in the mind of the reader. His main contention that Cromwell was the founder of England's colonial and commercial greatness and laid plans that not only were ahead of his time but were prophetic of future developments as well, has not met with the approval of scholars. Nevertheless, the articles are well worth reading, because they give a breadth and spaciousness to England's history of the Cromwellian period, and show, as do few other works, the influence that the commercial needs of a nation exert in creating international points of contact and laying the foundations for colonial empire. Beer manifestly enjoyed this subject and wrote with more ease and enthusiasm than he usually allowed himself; but it is noticeable that when six years later he went again over the same ground, he was much more cautious and restrained in his estimate of Cromwell's influence upon England's colonial and commercial expansion, and more ready to credit others of the

period with the initiation of programs that Cromwell took ready-made from their hands.

In 1903, Beer was ready to take up the long deferred task of examining the documents abroad. Going to England, he settled down in London and for fourteen months conducted an arduous investigation of the vast mass of unprinted material in various London archives, the greater part of which was in the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane. With the monograph already issued as his guide, he made a systematic survey of all the records that bore upon his subject. Day after day and week after week, he studied the contents of the great collections, volume by volume and bundle by bundle, making careful notes and extracts of all that seemed necessary for his purpose. In order to ascertain the truth, he gathered his facts with a patience and devotion that has rarely, if ever, been surpassed, filling many notebooks with abstracts, quotations, figures, and tables of statistics that he gleaned, with exceptional intelligence and understanding, from the documents before him. Except in the case of rare pamphlets and broadsides, he paid little attention to printed sources, confident that the *Calendar of State Papers*—the volumes of which had been greatly added to since 1893 and were steadily increasing in number,—could be readily obtained at

home, and that in Professor Seligman's library of eighteenth century economic literature he would find a body of pamphlets that would supply him with all that he needed in the way of contemporary mercantilist opinion. He spent but little time in the British Museum, depending for his data from that great repository upon the transcripts that had already begun to accumulate in the Library of Congress at Washington. At times the extent of the material that confronted him in England seemed almost overwhelming, and he was wont to wonder whether he would ever be able to organize it in such fashion as to build therefrom a symmetrical historical structure. From personal conversations with him in London, I know that he was often discouraged because of the complexity of the work to be accomplished.

After his return from England in 1904 and after he had begun to sort and assemble his evidence, the outlook brightened and the way to the desired goal became clearer and more direct. The plan which he had originally formulated was an elaborate one: to describe and explain the origins, establishment, and development of the British colonial system up to the outbreak of the disagreements that directly culminated in the American Revolution; to analyze the underlying principles of British colonial policy,

especially in so far as they found expression in the laws of trade and navigation; to study the English fiscal system, to the extent that it concerned the colonies; to deal with colonial legislation in all matters that vitally affected the economic relations of the dependencies to the mother country; to investigate the economic life of the colonies themselves in all that concerned their commercial and manufacturing activities; to describe the British official system in America, with the specific object of ascertaining to what extent the laws were enforced; and, finally, to discuss the relations of the economic to the political system, inseparably connected, as they were, the one with the other. This was a large program, and one that Beer was unable to carry out, even in the parts of the subject that he lived to complete. Limiting himself, as he did, to the economic features of the old British empire, he was for that reason barred from presenting a perfectly balanced picture of British policy, which in its widest aspects dealt with other matters than those that concerned trade and finance; and depending, as he did, mainly on the records that accumulated in the hands of the various governmental departments and boards in England, he did not take into sufficient account the conditions, social, political, and economic, prevailing in the colonies

themselves. He gives, therefore, but one side of the story, the side seen from the standpoint of the mother country, but he deals with that aspect of the case in a manner so elaborate and with a temper so restrained as to make it unnecessary for any one ever to go over the ground again with the same thoroughness and care.

While in England in 1903-1904, Beer concerned himself largely with the documents of the eighteenth century, so it happened that when he returned to America and began to take stock of his material, he found himself better prepared to treat of the period after 1750 than with the origins and establishment of the system. Consequently he began at once to make ready for publication a volume on the period from 1754 to 1765, the last of the series he planned to write, though the first to be issued. This decision to prepare and publish his last volume before taking up the others shows, in the first place, that he had not fully investigated the material relating to the earlier period, and, in the second, that he was handling his subject, not in the order of its chronological development, but in a manner analytical rather than sequential, and that continuity of treatment was not to be a primary feature of his presentation. The volume issued in 1907 and entitled *British Colonial Policy, 1754-1765,* was no

mere enlargement of his master's thesis; it was a completely new study, disclosing how much he had learned from the manuscript sources in England, and how wholly impossible it would have been for him or any one else to write of the period from the printed sources in America. It presented for the first time the situation in the colonies, as the British government saw it, during the exciting years of the Seven Years' War and the events accompanying and following the signing of the treaty of Paris; and its contents were a good deal of a revelation even to readers already supposedly familiar with the character of the period. It is undoubtedly the most interesting and informing of all the volumes that Beer ever published, for its point of view is new, its facts, for the most part, are fresh and invigorating, and its conclusions are of the significant and far-reaching sort. It has attracted a larger number of readers than has any of the other volumes, for though Beer intended to treat his subject quite apart from the controversies of the American Revolution, he made in this volume a contribution of first rank to the causes of that event, and, consequently, attracted to what he had written the attention of all interested in the movements that led up to our struggle for independence.

Having thus cleared the ground of that part of

the evidence which bulked largest in his notebooks and at that time undoubtedly held first place in his thoughts, he turned back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to examine the evidence for the origin and establishment of the colonial system. Apparently, at first, he planned to handle the earlier period briefly and to devote the greater part of his attention to the more fully developed system of the eighteenth century; but as time went on and his evidence accumulated, he realized that it would be necessary to deal at some length with the era of beginnings and to lay on a generous scale the foundations of his structure. As he became involved in his work, he allowed his material to sway his purpose so far as to demand three volumes for the years to 1688, and so to require for the adequate treatment of the period to 1754, not four volumes, as at first intended, but seven, making eight in all covering the entire period from earliest times to 1765. In 1908 he issued one volume, entitled *The Origins of the British Colonial System, 1578-1660,* and in 1912, after spending six additional months in England, continuing his investigations and enlarging the scope of his inquiry, he finished two volumes more, constituting the first part of his study of the old colonial system from 1660 to 1754, a subject that he intended to complete in three

additional parts of two volumes each. This enlargement of his plan delayed the progress of his work so much that he was never able to reach the eighteenth century at all in his analysis of the older system, and thus by an irony of circumstance he was destined never to touch the very period which he considered most important and which he knew had been most neglected in the past. This "neglected period of American history," which extends from 1690 to 1754, is from the standpoint of British policy the turning point in our colonial relations with Great Britain. Beer wanted most of all to interpret those years and had collected his data with that end chiefly in view. He had already spent another three months in England for the purpose of completing his investigation of it; he had begun to marshal his evidence for the four volumes that would contain his matured opinions on the application of British policy during those years; and he was preparing to bring his highly trained and powerful mind to bear on its profoundly difficult problems, when in the August of 1914 war came and changed vitally and fundamentally the direction of his thoughts and the purposes of his life.

With the outbreak of the Great War, Beer the historian gave way to Beer the publicist. The instincts and cravings of the man of affairs were

aroused, and a driving sense of obligation to take such part as he was able in the work of the world so dominated his thoughts as to obliterate for the time being all interest in the events of a bygone age. Turning aside to write on a subject that was very dear to his heart—a better understanding with Great Britain and a closer accord among the English-speaking peoples of the world,—he contributed a series of articles to *The New Republic, The Political Science Quarterly, The Forum,* and other similar publications, which, with a number of additional chapters, he eventually gathered into a volume, issued in 1917, under the title, *The English Speaking Peoples, their Future Relations and Joint International Obligations.* Though there were times when he feared that he would never be able to turn away from the issues of the present to find pleasure again in the problems of the past, he did not in reality ever lose sight of the obligations he had incurred to history and historical scholarship. With the publication of his volume, *The English Speaking Peoples,* he thought for the moment that the time had come when he might resume the work that he undoubtedly considered the main interest of his life. On July 15, 1917, he wrote me, "I hope myself to be able next winter to get back into the eighteenth century harness and to work into shape some of

the material that I have collected. It faces me constantly on my shelves, but before I can take it up again I must finish some articles that I have promised." The will was there, but the opportunity never arrived. The notebooks were destined never again to be taken from their shelves. A new call came to a higher service and the moral obligation of a public-spirited citizen of the world overrode the demands of scholarship and the eighteenth century. The Peace Conference summoned him to Paris. In 1918 he accepted an appointment as chief of the colonial division of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, and the next year added to his duties those of the directorship of the Mandatory Section of the Secretariat of the League of Nations. He became absorbed in present day affairs, and the scholar who, by experience, knowledge, and mental aptitude, was best equipped to interpret from the standpoint of British policy this critical period of sixty years,—perhaps the most important years in the whole history of the British colonies in America, —sacrificed himself in the cause of international peace. The void in our history that was to have been filled with four volumes of data from manuscript sources and the luminous comments of a trained and judicial mind still remains a mute

witness to the loss which the world has suffered in the death of George Louis Beer.

The contribution that Beer made to history is, therefore, incomplete, a torso, powerfully built, rugged, and superb even in its unfinished state; but it is not incomplete in the lessons it teaches, the standards it maintains, and the methods it applies. In all its parts it demonstrates the same principles of thoroughness, candor, and truth, of scientific accuracy and historical impartiality that were inwrought in the very fibre of his being. "In no branch of historical writing," he said in 1908, "have such unwarranted conclusions been more generally drawn as in American colonial history. The conclusions may be right or wrong, but the essential point is that, for the most part, they are haphazard guesses of no scientific validity, because the precise information necessary for testing them is lacking. The economic life of the colonies is a page of history upon which, as yet, not many trustworthy sentences have been written. With the exception of a few monographs and articles on isolated subjects, the field is still in its primitive uncultivated condition." And again, "Economically, probably to a more important extent than politically, the colonies were part of a larger system which influenced their development in various ways. Here it restrained,

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there it stimulated. To understand the actual process, both the internal history of the colonies and their relations with the British empire will have to be studied." Some of the phases of this development were to a large extent outside the broad current of imperial history, but others were intimately bound up with Great Britain herself and could not be understood in isolation. Beer was not interested in the romantic, cultural, and patriotic aspects of his subject and had no confidence in conclusions drawn from evidence of that character. He insisted that topics of a very unromantic nature engage the attention of the historian, and believed that no final estimates in colonial history could be of value unless they were based on a study of commerce and land systems, manufactures, taxation, paper money, colonial and imperial finance, slavery and the slave trade, and the all-important problem of imperial defence. He knew, as every one of Professor Osgood's students was bound to know, that the colonies could never be understood when viewed solely as the beginnings out of which was to come the great industrial republic of the United States. He believed, and rightly, that such a view, in presenting only one phase of the story with its ensuing inevitable distortion, tended to engender unfair hostility toward factors that to any extent

hampered the fullest economic development of the colonies and so to play into the hands of those whose purpose it was to keep alive at the present time a hatred of Great Britain. Both politically and historically such a purpose ran counter to his highly developed sense of fairness and truth.

Perhaps the most important single contribution that Beer has made to the study of our colonial period is a new point of view. Osgood had not begun to look at the colonies from across the water until he went to England in 1909, and even after that he was always inclined to feel that Beer had gone too far in his reaction from the old, specifically American way of interpreting colonial history. But the latter in his first volume, issued in 1907, deliberately took the reader from the soil of America and set him down in the midst of those who were viewing the colonies from a position three thousand miles away. He wanted the reader to live for a time amidst the men and the offices and the documents that represented the British system of administration and to see the colonies from a distance as the British administrator and merchant saw them. He was convinced, as others have been convinced, that no one could do justice to British policy until he had studied it through the eyes of contemporary British officials and others who were

concerned with the management of colonial affairs; and the results have amply justified his belief. The effect of such a view is always impressive and sometimes startling, in that it brings old and familiar features into a new relief and presents to the observer new features that had not before been noticed at all. And because Beer was able to show that the new features were generally much the more important of the two, because trade and commerce are more necessary for an understanding of colonial history than are political institutions, he succeeded in the end in altering very radically the historical attitude of those who were willing to follow him with an open and receptive mind. Any one who is ready to study his volumes with an honest desire to grasp their significance and meaning will never be content to study colonial history in the old American way.

Next in importance to the point of view are the materials used and the subjects presented. Older writers who went to England in search of information regarding colonial affairs sought only for that which would throw light on local conditions in America. They had little or no interest in England's purposes or methods; those were subjects beyond their ken, of little or no moment as far as they could see. That which was to these writers

a thing apart is the very *raison d'être* of Beer's volumes. In the British documents he finds the key to the mystery, the clue to the labyrinth. He is not concerned with the usual stock in trade of the older historians—personalities, voyages, hardships, and settlements,—he goes straight to the heart of the colonial problem and from the material which accumulated in official hands learns that colonial settlement and development were more a British than an American matter, requiring for their elucidation a knowledge of contemporary British thought and opinion, motives and needs, social conditions and tendencies. His story is that of ideas gradually forming in men's minds and of the attempts to put these ideas into practice. He is always searching for the reason of things, showing a fondness for human psychology as well as for matters of business, commerce, finance, and administration. He is concerned with the economic side of things, and faces difficulties that have usually been avoided in the past, because they were laborious to overcome and seemingly dull and uninteresting as subjects for investigation. Analyzing the financial ideas and methods of the seventeenth century, in order to ascertain wherein they are necessary to an understanding of our settlements and their growth has not been in the past, as it is

not in the present, a popular pastime; and one is afraid that even now, when Beer has brought within the compass of single chapters such matters as "The Stuart Regulation of the Tobacco Industry" and "The English Fiscal System and Imperial Finances,"—one sixty pages in length and the other more than ninety—there will be but few who will have the courage to master them or to comprehend their importance from the standpoint of British policy.

The student of today knows well enough that older commentaries upon the laws of trade and navigation, such as have been written by Bancroft and those who have accepted his opinions, are worth very little, because these writers have not studied thoroughly the laws in the light of their origin and the circumstances of their being. So uninformed and superficial has been most American writing on the subject of British commercial policy that what Beer has contributed in these volumes stands in a class by itself. As an example of painstaking thoroughness, his work is unsurpassed by anything put out by an American historian on a subject intrinsically so important. The profusion of references, notes, quotations, calculations, statistics, and tabulated estimates, though not conducive to the comfort and ease of the reader, bear witness to the

care with which every statement in the text is supported and elaborated. Beer allows nothing to pass that contributes to his main theme, and displays remarkable ingenuity in the way he marshals his figures and works out his averages. When one realizes that statistical material available for the study of our early history is scanty and faulty, one is the more impressed with the almost uncanny insight that Beer possessed into the meaning of the evidence he discovered. The reader who complains that the volumes contain an undue amount of foot-note material is justified in his criticism, for some of the pages are made up of little else; but in the long run, he who is really interested in the subject will be convinced of the necessity of all that is printed. To the worker in the same field the volumes form a rich quarry of suggestion and reference, a guide to some of the most important sources of our history, a manual of rules governing the proper course to be pursued in studying the British end of our colonial story. Parts of what Beer has written will be rewritten and enlarged, other parts will be studied anew and modified, and still other parts will be corrected and improved; but no one will ever attempt to review, in its entirety, the ground that Beer has covered, or is

likely to change, in any essential particular, the conclusions that he has reached.

In his first volume, Beer solves with remarkable success the intricate and baffling problem of the origins of the British system, viewing the founding of the colonies as the outcome of a natural process of expansion and the settlements themselves as outlying dependencies, whose part it was to reinforce the mother country in her inevitable conflict with other European maritime powers. He shows us England engaged in defining her policy toward colonial trade and giving shape to some of the foundation principles that afterwards were embodied in the navigation acts of Cromwell and Charles II. He makes it clear that as tobacco was at the time the only colonial staple of importance, it was in the regulation of the tobacco industry during the reigns of the first two Stuarts that England found her opportunity to exclude foreigners from commercial relations with her overseas possessions and to confine the carrying trade to British and colonial vessels. I am inclined to think that he has exaggerated the tendency, but faintly visible at this early period, toward the creation of what he calls "a self-sufficient commercial empire," and credits the Stuarts with a more conscious effort in the direction of commercial and colonial coherence than

they actually made; but he does recognize the complete decentralization that existed during the Civil War, and modifies very materially his estimate of Cromwell as a promoter of tropical colonization.

In the first and second volumes that constitute Part I of *The Old Colonial System, 1660-1754,* he deals with the establishment of the system and its actual operation as far as the year 1688. He discusses the economic motives characterizing the period; explains, as never has been done before, the purposes underlying the passage of the laws of trade and navigation; analyzes at length the English fiscal system and the various aspects of imperial finance and imperial defense; works out with considerable detail the machinery of administration; and closes his first volume with a chapter on the place of the slave trade in the general scheme. In the second volume, he takes up each of the colonies in turn, from Newfoundland to Barbadoes, and presents a study of each colony or set of colonies in its commercial relations with the mother country. He gives a detailed and accurate picture of the economic conditions in America during these twenty-eight years, as far as such a picture can be obtained from British sources only, and shows how these conditions were affected by the operation of the

laws of trade and the British fiscal policy. All that he says of England's efforts at this time to furnish the colonies with military and naval protection, of the four and a half per cent export duty levied in Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands, and of the slave trade is exceedingly valuable, and makes a contribution of first importance to the history of the subject. Much the same can be said of the commercial and economic history of Newfoundland, upon which nothing had been written hitherto. Perhaps the greatest merit of these volumes lies in the fact that the treatment of the subject as a whole is such as to bring together the general and the particular and to show their relation to a common commercial scheme, thus enabling the reader to comprehend the essential unity of the scattered parts of the British world and to determine the place which each colony occupied in the minds of British statesmen as far as its value to the mother country was concerned. Seen from this angle the colonies in some respects take on quite a new appearance. Furthermore, in these volumes, Beer has given us an instructive object lesson in the proper method of interpreting historical evidence. Rejecting as dangerous and well-nigh incurable the tendency to "infer subjectively that because men of the present day would have found a system insufferably restric-

tive their predecessors, living several hundred years before under radically different social and intellectual conditions, must necessarily also have done so," he discusses the navigation acts and the commercial policy of the British government in the enlightened spirit of one who seeks to understand their relation to the current economic practices and needs of the time. Recognizing that the commercial and colonial doctrines of the seventeenth century are in many particulars repugnant to modern economic, political, and ethical ideas, he makes it abundantly evident that to judge the past in the light of the present is to become involved in hopeless misunderstandings and irremediable distortions of the truth. Loyal American though he was, he would not demean history by compelling it to serve as an object lesson for the cultivation of patriotic virtues.

Inasmuch as the year 1688, at which these volumes close, marks but the first stage in the history of the enforcement of the navigation acts and the shaping of British policy, it is clear that what Beer has written presents but imperfectly the subject embraced in the title to these volumes. He has nothing to say of the old colonial system at the summit of its influence and power, which was reached only after 1696, with the passage of the

navigation act of that year, the establishment of the Board of Trade, and the adoption of a more rigorous policy of enforcement. In his fourth volume, which he published first and which he wrote before he had given full time to a study of the earlier phases of the subject, there is, despite its title, *British Colonial Policy, 1754-1765,* very little concerning colonial policy in the sense employed in the first three volumes. It discusses practice not policy; events not ideas. Had Beer been able to approach this period in its proper chronological order, he could, I believe, have increased its value by bringing out more clearly than he has done the relation of these years to those that immediately preceded. How far he would have done so is rendered doubtful by the fact that his work in all its parts lacks continuity. It takes the form of a series of topical essays, chronologically considered, each chapter standing in a measure isolated from the others, with the connections unexplained. We do not get as clearly as we would like the processes of development which were going on in the minds of Englishmen—statesmen and merchants—and which led to the gradual unfolding of the idea of the self-sufficient empire. In Beer's work that empire tends to become conspicuous before its time. Mercantilism of the eighteenth century was not the

mercantilism of the seventeenth century, and it even differed in the period of the Seven Years' War from the form that it took in the early part of the century, but from what Beer has written one would not gather that any such modifications were taking place. In this sense his work is wanting in that very evolutionary element upon which he laid so much stress in 1893.

Though possessed of a marvellously exact and penetrating mind, Beer lacks in some measure the imaginative faculty and seems unable to give to his treatment organic unity, either in space or in time. Though handling his subject on a large scale, he does not bind together its different parts into a closely knit whole. Consequently his work fails to arouse in the reader the pleasurable feeling of anticipation or the sense of movement toward some definite end. This is notably true of the two volumes covering the period from 1660 to 1688. The difficulty is somewhat enhanced by the manner of presentation. Economic influences, it is true, do not lend themselves to vivid and picturesque narrative and matters of taxation and finance are not easily propounded in terms suitable for average minds; but it is not so much his subject matter that is at fault as his dislike of verbiage, his instinctive desire to say what he has to say in the briefest

possible form, and his almost complete suppression of his own personality. He is never confused in his ideas or obscure in his statements, for he was the master of an admirably clear, forcible, and luminous style, but his forms of expression lack smoothness and simplicity, lightness of touch, and suggestiveness of thought, the presence of which would have made his work easier to read and its meaning easier to extract. Some of his more troublesome chapters are as concise and compact as a demonstration in mathematics and are as devoid of the human element as an analysis of a legal contract. Beer's work must be more than read, it must be studied. Beer was not interested in his reader—perhaps not enough so, even for his own purpose; he was interested in his subject and in the task that confronted him of drawing from his evidence its meaning and significance. What he has written will be caviare to the general, and few there will be, except those professionally interested, who will perform the feat of reading his volumes through. Nevertheless what he has produced serves admirably to invalidate the common saying that a book is not worth writing unless it is to be read, or worth reading unless it is readable.

Beer's work has had and will continue to have a widespread influence upon students of colonial

history both here and in England. Beer and Osgood are everywhere recognized as the exponents of a version of colonial history that is destined in the long run to supplant all older versions, except among those who read their history for its literary and dramatic qualities. The volumes which they have written mark an epoch in the treatment of American colonial history. Hereafter no writer, teacher, or student, who takes a serious view of historical study, can ignore the plain lesson which they have taught or allow himself to perpetuate the shallow particularistic notion of thirteen colonies practically independent of Great Britain, which has too long held sway over American minds. A larger colonial world is beginning to take form in the writings of modern scholars, just as it began to take form in the thoughts and purposes of Englishmen three centuries ago. The center of that world was at Whitehall, where sat the Privy Council, the Secretaries of State, the Treasury, Admiralty, and other departments and boards which made up the British governmental organization, and where, too, sat the Board of Trade, as the advisory and inquisitorial agent of the Crown. The outlying members of this larger world were the colonies from Nova Scotia to Barbadoes, nearly thirty in number, the majority of which were under a com-

mon administration, were subject to common trade laws, customs system, and vice-admiralty jurisdiction, and were guarded with a jealous and watchful eye. They were fostered because they contributed to the wealth and power of the mother kingdom, and were protected because they furnished available strategic points in England's many struggles with her great maritime rivals of the Continent. The history of this larger world must be written before the place of our thirteen colonies in the history of civilization can be even understood. We are beginning to discover how substantial was the British system and how well ordained were the organs established for the execution of its purpose. When in the past the system has been discussed at all, stress has been laid on its weaknesses and defects and on the immoral character of the treatment it accorded our own particular colonies. The time is past for so maladroit a purpose. The business of the future will be to find out what the system was, what it sought to accomplish, and how well it performed its work. When all the evidence is gathered and massed together, this organized British control will assume unexpected proportions, and will be found inextricably interwoven with the life and government of the colonies. Even in the seventeenth century, we begin to feel that the revolu-

tionary struggle to come was not between a people and a king, but between a people and a system—a far better system than most of us have been taught to believe, and one which, though often working badly and lacking in unity and centralized efficiency, was sufficiently alive to play a very important part in our history. If this be true, then the time will come when the causes of our American Revolution, nowhere today adequately appraised, will undergo revision, not only in the light of new evidence—of which there is an enormous amount still to be examined,—but in the spirit of a truer and more thorough understanding of the problems involved. To the solution of these problems, Beer made a contribution of great significance, and though he did not live to complete what he had begun, he will always hold a place of deserved distinction among American historians as a pioneer explorer in an almost untrodden field.

III

THE SCHOLAR IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

BY

A. E. ZIMMERN

George Louis Beer was the *beau ideal* of a scholar in public affairs. He made his influence felt at the moment and in the manner in which it was most needed; and his loss has left a gap, not only in American but in international affairs, which it is impossible to fill. His was a pivotal influence. Though the world little knew it, he was one of the Indispensables—a title too often bestowed upon noisy figures of the foreground to whom it least belongs. Much has happened since his departure which would assuredly have gone otherwise had he stayed. But of this and indeed of the range and scope of his work and its effects the present writer is not qualified to speak. He will best fulfill the mission entrusted to him if he attempts to embody his own personal sense of admiration and bereavement in an estimate of the function and service of which George Louis Beer, as he saw him, for the first and last time in Paris in June, 1919, lives in his memory as a permanent and inspiring exemplar.

What is the place of the scholar in public affairs? There is a venerable tradition, not yet extinct in our seats of learning, and tracing back its origins

to Plato and Aristotle, that there is no place at all. The lover of wisdom, said Plato, in an oft-quoted passage written no doubt at a moment of confusion and disillusionment not unlike that through which we are passing today, had best be hidden under the hedge until reason reappears upon the public scene. The world has no ears for his message: he had better keep it for the elect. And Aristotle, too, on one side of his doctrine, through his sharp distinction between the "practical" and "theoretical" plane of life, and their respective careers, lent encouragement to the same inclinations of seclusion and monasticism. Prophets and preachers of city-state patriotism as they were, Plato and Aristotle became, nevertheless, partly through this strain in their doctrine, partly through the course of events which swept away their political constructions, the originators of a school of thought or a tradition which divorced the scholar from the state and immured him, first in a monastery and then in a University.

That there was sound reason for this traditional view of the scholar's part no one will deny who reflects how tender is the plant of Truth, and how likely to perish amid the buffetings of circumstance in a world where power and riches, force visible and invisible, hold sway. The humanities and the

sciences, the disinterested curiosity and devotion of the seeker after truth for its own sake, survived through centuries of intellectual chaos and superstition because, here and there in the community, there were homes of quiet where students, unconscious of the tramping of armed men at their doors, lived the life of the mind and the spirit. In the long roll of years, between the five and twelve hundreds, roughly between Boethius and Abelard, to be a scholar was to be a "religious"; and in the centuries that followed the Universities carried on the same tradition of the scholar's place in society. With rare exceptions, of whom Erasmus is the most conspicuous, the Renaissance and post-Renaissance scholar remained secluded in his ivory tower, pursuing studies unintelligible to the multitude and desiring, not so much to influence the outside world by his ideas and discoveries as to be left in peace to worship the goddess of truth, or to enjoy the privileges of his learned corporation, as he and his fellows thought fit.

With the effect of this mode of living and thinking upon the study of the natural sciences we are not concerned. Modern life offers so many tempting prizes to those who are willing to apply scientific discovery to lucrative ends that it may perhaps plausibly be argued that the world in which Newton

and Copernicus lived and thought was more favorable to the ideal of the man of science than the society in which Einstein and Marconi are featured in daily journals. But of the humanities it can be stated emphatically that, confined to the ivory tower, they are no longer humanities. Literature, philosophy, history, economics, and, above all, politics cannot be studied sincerely and truthfully from behind Common Room curtains or in a secure and padded little world whither the heartbeat of reality can rarely penetrate. All experience goes to prove that the detachment thus secured is not detachment at all but a disguised and unconscious partiality. In the study of man, man tragical or comical, man economical, man political, no accumulation of documents can act as proxy for man himself, and there is a difference of life and death, of reality and dryasdust, between the thoughts and writings of those who have adventured with eager inquiring mind into the heated arena of affairs and those who have sat by, connoisseur-like, notebook in hand, to mark and "interpret" the issue without living experience of the conflict.

George Louis Beer was no philosopher of the ivory tower. He was "a man of the world": he lived in the world, and his thoughts were derived

from close observation of the world. But, while he was thus free from the taint of monasticism, he was equally fortunate in his avoidance of its more fashionable opposite—the temptation to subordinate truth to propaganda.

For the medieval scholar freedom from the partialities and prejudices of the ephemeral world around him was secured by his seclusion in monastery or university. It is one of the ironies of the whirligig of time that, increasingly both in Europe and North America, such freedom is now best ensured not by being a Hacher to seats of learning but by remaining independent of their connections and obligations. The University of today is no longer an autonomous learned corporation pursuing its life independently of the community in which it happens to be placed. It is part and parcel of a system of "national" education, and, as a general rule, as part of the scheme of the national life, its hallmark is desired, or even required, for entrance to the teaching professions. Its government, too, in many cases, is influenced and even controlled, by the public authority. There are thus frequent and subtle occasions of interaction between the world of government and the world of learning, and the scholar, emancipated from the ivory tower, is exposed to temptations of another

kind to which he has too often in recent times succumbed. In the Germany of the ex-Kaiser, for instance, it was difficult, and in Prussia practically impossible, for a professor of politics, economics, or modern history to give expression to other than orthodox views both as regards the foreground and the background of current events. To be "gesinnungstüchtig" was a *sine qua non* not only for promotion but for unmolested occupation of a post already attained; and the parrot-chorus of professors accompanying every move of German policy before and during the war will be remembered as a glaring example of the danger of descending from the ivory tower to the arena. Many of the ninety-three signatures of the famous manifesto of the German intellectuals at the outbreak of the war have since retracted with the admission that they were imperfectly informed as to the matters at issue; but what a prostitution of place and name is involved in this reckless obedience to governmental command or suggestion! Nor is this sapping of intellectual integrity confined to autocracies. Democracy, with its jealous and increasing control over seats of learning aided by public funds, is quite equally capable of playing the inquisitor or the dictator, and not only in the United States, where liberal public opinion has become alive to the danger,

but in Britain also, independence of thought and freedom of expression are liable to be hampered by considerations of experience from which old-fashioned scholars were free.

From all this medley of influences, of action and reaction, of temptations to orthodoxy and impulses of protest and rebellion, George Louis Beer was mercifully free. He was what the Germans call a "Privatgelehrter," a scholar independent in every sense materially as well as spiritually; and thus, when the moment came, he was all the freer to serve his country, and his learning and counsel were all the more valued because all the world knew that they were the sterling contributions of a free spirit.

Let us now look a little more closely at the characteristics of the type of scholar of whom George Louis Beer will be remembered as a distinguished representative.

The scholar in public affairs is not a statesman. He remains, through all activities and vicissitudes, a scholar. His main object, that is, is not to carry on public affairs but to understand them and interpret them to others. When Thucydides commanded at Amphipolis he was the Thucydides, the same obscurant, reflective and disinterested mind, that later wrote the history, including the record of his own misadventure; and when Beer sat in the Hotel

Crillon at Paris, a father in counsel to the younger men and a very present help in moments of perplexity to the older, he was assuredly thinking, not only of the colonial and other problems on which his advice was sought but on all the deeper meaning of the scene around him, of the New World at grips with the legacy of the Old World's problems, of the contact of minds and of civilizations, and of the vista of problems, and the tasks of understanding and interpretation thus opened up. The difference between the scholar and the statesman in public affairs is that the latter is concerned, necessarily concerned as a rule, with the foreground, whilst the former spends his busy official day in ever present realization of the background. Just as Thucydides, alone among the Greeks of his generation, came to his war-work with a scientific understanding of the early history of his country at his command, so that, perhaps for the first time in the history of the human mind, he could place the events through which he was living in their setting of time and space, so Beer came to Paris with a historical and philosophical equipment which gave added emphasis to every affirmation and added force to every judgment. Yet, in a sense, the affirmation and the judgment, the advice as to this or that course of policy and action, were, in the scholar's

mind, but of secondary importance; for he knew, better than the politicians and journalists who were so ready to work out or write up his opinions, how little the actions of statesmen could deflect the slow steady march of impersonal, or rather multi-personal, forces and how far more important it was, especially in the complex swift-moving world of today, to understand the powers of the age, than to seek to dominate and subject them. The world has moved strangely far from the hopes and schemes of the United States Delegation of 1919; but Beer, of all men, would be the least disappointed and disillusioned. He would see, in the unexpected sequel to the work on which he and his colleagues spent their strength, not the arbitrary hand of accident, or of domestic faction or foreign folly or wickedness, but the complex interaction and working out of forces which it is our business neither to deplore nor to despise, but to understand. Thus the scholar is always stronger than the statesman, for he is always forearmed against failure. The disaster which, by postponing his hopes and negating his too hasty ideals, is apt to turn the statesman into a cynic or a demagogue is to the scholar but a fresh and even inspiring urge to a new and deeper task of understanding. Have forces for which he made no allowance surged up and spoiled his reckoning?

There are new vistas open for exploration, new material for the great volume, ever being composed in the mind if not on paper, on contemporary history, the true nature and deeper forces of the world in which his brief span of human life is set.

Beer's background, like that of Thucydides, was predominantly historical, and it is in this that the scholar in public affairs is distinguished from that other type, with whom he is constantly in conflict or rivalry, the philosopher. The scholar in public affairs is a Realist; he has his feet on the rock of fact, of world facts. He has learned to orientate himself, not according to some inner light related perhaps to the stars, but unrelated to the world in which we live our daily lives, but according to the march and movement of forces operating broadly in the world around him. For him at any rate as the starting point in his journey of exploration, the familiar landmarks hold Europe and America; capitalism and socialism, nationalism and internationalism, are part of his mental furniture. He speaks the same language as the statesmen and the democratic public, though his words and thoughts may cut deeper. He builds on the same foundations, though his yard and rule may be ampler than theirs. And thus, unlike the philosopher, who sets up his utopia in an uncharted

wilderness that will never be marked on the plain man's map, he can carry men with him in his thinking. He may go fast and far, but at least the first stage of his journey is along a familiar road.

Yet the scholar, if he is to be true to his inspiration, must give rein to his curiosity, whether men can follow him or not. Thucydides, the first and greatest scholar in public affairs, and the master of realists, began indeed as a historian: but he ended as a psychologist. He began with his contemporaries, but he far outran them. And the same, in a lesser degree, will always hold good of all true scholars who adventure into public affairs resolved to continue learning and thinking and not to prostitute their equipment to purely ephemeral ends. The mistake of the idealists is to suppose that the study of human nature *in vacuo,* apart from time and circumstance, is the right starting point for the understanding of human life. Human history is indeed unintelligible without a study of human nature; but the study of human nature is the last, not the first, stage of the journey. Whatever may be true of the poet, or of other artists who work rather by intuition than by reflection, the scholar, in the true sense of the word, must of necessity proceed from the outer inwards, from the seen and human to the unseen and unknown, from the life

of man in society to the life of the soul and spirit, in a word, from history to philosophy. It is only after a long and laborious exploration that he can feel as much at home in the private and secluded underworld of subconsciousness, whence so many chains of causation are set in movement, as in the imposing outward world of public affairs, which forced the starting point of his study.

There is another mark of statesmanship which belongs to the scholar in public affairs. He has the sense and touch of a living issue—that unmistakable power which the French, more sensitive than ourselves, entitle *flair*. Just as it falls to the statesman, laying down the program of his party for a campaign or an election, to select this or that subject on which to concentrate the popular mind, so the scholar is quicker in his choice of study and contemplation by the importance this or that topic is likely to assume in the public life of his country or of the world. Philosophers may select their subjects for their intrinsic interest to a solitary mind; the Scotus Erigena, that classic example of detachment, was no doubt true to his inner light when he spent himself on a book which only became topical enough to excite controversy and condemnation four centuries after his death. The historian's mind moves in a different orbit. Beer's choice of the Old

Colonial System as a subject for research must have borne an inner relation from the first to present-day problems of imperialism and commercial policy, and his association with the studies of *The Round Table,* and in particular with the work of Mr. Lionel Curtis, bore witness to his sense that, sooner rather than later, the constitutional problem of the British Empire must emerge into the foreground of public discussion. On both these issues his vision was prophetic, so that when the moment came he was forearmed with facts and reasonings and was able to make his book on *The English Speaking Peoples* far more than a useful *livre d'occasion.* It will be a matter of perpetual regret that we have not been fated to watch the movement of his mind in these crucial post-war years, when problems deeper than constitutional and more testing for courage and insight even than commercial are calling to students on both sides of the Atlantic for study and formulation.

There is, however, an essential difference, on which it is worth while dwelling for a moment, between the *flair* of the scholar and of the statesman. The statesman, or at least the politician, exercises his sixth sense, his gift of political divination, by a kind of blind unanalyzed intuition. Knowing his countrymen from long experience,

he is able, almost without conscious effort, to project his mind into theirs and to anticipate their reactions; all that he need do is to think away the particular knowledge and official experience which have been available to him and not to them. This kind of "flair" is found, in greater or lesser degree, in almost all persons who have occupied, for any considerable period, a public position. Queen Victoria, for instance, possessed it, although she never had to face an election. In itself, it is a useful, indeed almost an indispensable part of the statesman's equipment; but if it is not supplemented by a knowledge, at least equally well-grounded, of the real basis of affairs, as opposed to the popular idea as to their basis, it may become a danger, and even a national incubus. To know what people are saying may be the sole business of a newspaper magnate intent on selling his copy—though even this may be doubted—but it is certainly not enough for a statesman.

Very different is the *flair* of the scholar. To begin with, he is concerned, always and everywhere, not only with *what* people think but with *why* they think as they do. He explores the whole background of their state of mind. And then again, what is even more important, his *flair*, based as it is upon knowledge and not upon unanalyzed experience, is

not sharply bounded by the frontiers of his own country or even province. Holding the whole world consciously in his field of vision, he can balance Europe against America, Islam against Christendom, the working class against the captains of industry, the speechless multitude against the vociferous criers in the marketplace. This is the real *flair*—not to follow, or anticipate, the cry of the moment, but to be able, from a quiet desk in New York, or a busy office in Paris, to look into the hearts and minds of millions of plain human beings in five continents and to measure the effects of this or that project of statesmanship upon their humble but multitudinous purposes.

We pass to another element in the scholar's equipment—his integrity. It is one of the chief of the scholar's tasks in public affairs to maintain, and to encourage others to maintain, as high a standard of truthfulness, truthfulness of thought as well as of fact, on the platform as in the study, in the official memorandum as in the academic essay. This is indeed the first indispensable step in the long and difficult process of applying to public affairs the standards and obligations of private life. Where there is no regard for truth, where phrases and figures are twisted to serve momentary ends, where the expert is used not as a public servant but as a parti-

san advocate, where, in fact, wilful ignorance and falsehood have entered in and made their home in public places, there is no room for the scholar. For the scholar exists to give freely of his best to the public cause; and where he has no assurance that his services will be utilized in the spirit in which he offers them, where the gifts of his mind are liable to be prostituted for other than public ends, he had best withdraw his aid. Happily Beer was never placed before so painful a decision. But those who worked with him know how high was his standard of intellectual honesty and accuracy and how unflinchingly he maintained it. And they are in a position to measure the value, in an official society, of the leavening power of a scholar's truthfulness. The politician, in cheating others, may even in time come to cheat himself. The scholar, having learned through severe self-discipline not to allow his own mind and soul to be cheated, has neither the power nor the desire to practice deception upon his fellowmen.

One last characteristic must be touched upon, for Beer would surely not have it omitted. The scholar in public affairs, however detached and philosophic in outlook, is before all things a patriot. If he is willing and cares to serve his country, it is because

he loves her and believes in her. Beer was a good American. And it was just because he was a good American that he did not shrink from investigating the origins of the Republic and revising, where truth required it, an unduly one-sided version of early American history, just as Masaryk, equally scholar and equally patriot, earned the almost unanimous displeasure of the land he later liberated by demolishing the credibility of some of its most cherished records. Where truth and patriotism are in conflict, truth must necessarily have precedence. But in fact, they are never in conflict; for, seen in the right perspective, a country's love of truth is part and parcel of its inheritance and its greatness, and a community which thinks itself compelled to sacrifice truth for any national interest is halfway on the road to decadence. Beer's Americanism was made of sterner stuff than the apologies of some of our up-to-date propagandists. The America that he worked for was an America proud and upright, honorable and self-reliant, demanding from others no more than she imposed on herself; and the Britain with whom it was his dearest wish that America, his America, should walk in closest association was a Britain equally true to her long and noble tradition of statesmanship and bearing witness, in every fresh

generation of her sons, at home and overseas, to the qualities of mind and soul, valor and endurance and integrity, which have caused her cliff-set, misty island to be regarded as a school of public affairs for all mankind.

IV

THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLES

BY

W. H. SHEPARDSON

GEORGE LOUIS BEER'S friends miss him greatly in these troubled days. It would be helpful to sit down to the table with him again and draw out his views on Mosul. He would have seen all the available reports on the administration of Papua, and would discuss the significant differences between the present régime and that of the German Colonial Office. One can almost hear his caustic comment on the failure of the Liberian loan. He would know the exact number of black troops in the occupied areas of Germany and could relate their presence there to the whole scheme of French colonial policy. He would have plenty of light to throw on the scanty press dispatches which covered the Franco-British nationality dispute in Tunis. He had the knowledge and wisdom needed to convert our prepossessions into judgments. But since we cannot go to him, we must be content with some second best.

Those who were acquainted with Beer through the distinguished character of his services in research and at the Paris Conference, as well as those who knew him more intimately, find consolation in the fact that his work is not lost to the world. And at least one of his friends prefers to believe that the

world is not lost to Beer. For it interested him hugely, and he looked upon its tumbled manifestations with a sympathetic spirit which was at once the corrector and complement of his detached mind. In spite of the heavy cast of his published writings, he was saved from taking thought ponderously by his knowledge of life, his frank curiosity, and his unfailing sense of humor. He found time—no one knew when—to examine and understand and remember innumerable documents at Paris. He found time—no one knew how—to talk at length with a great number and variety of people. And with it all he kept the balance in a way that those who have tried and failed to keep it can best admire.

* * *

Beer's special interest in Anglo-American relations was first aroused by the study of British colonial history during his undergraduate days at Columbia University. From 1893, when his Master's thesis appeared under the title of *"The Commercial Policy of England toward American Colonies"* until his death, he was a relentless student of Anglo-American affairs. All that he read was grist to the mill,—noted, laboriously copied out and filed. Yet he did not gather facts to prove an *a priori* thesis: he had faith that from the kaleidoscopic fragments of his reading design would eventually take shape.

Moreover, the wish with him was never father to the thought. "It is easily conceivable," he wrote in 1907, "and not at all improbable, that the political evolution of the next centuries may take such a course that the American Revolution will lose the great significance that is now attached to it, and will appear merely as the temporary separation of two kindred peoples whose inherent similarity was obscured by superficial differences arising from dissimilar economic and social conditions." Yet in 1917, within a few months after the United States had entered the war, when propaganda was the order of the day, when his "prolonged and intensive study of the relations between the two great branches of the English-speaking people" compelled him to write his one war book, he declined to be stampeded. "It is not the object of this book," he said, "to discuss the possibility of such a political union. If this outcome be in the lap of the gods, it will come in the fulness of time, be the date near or far."

Instead, with that thoroughness which was his characteristic, and with a wealth of citation which is at once the joy and the despair of his reader, he proceeded from first principles, unwilling to open the question of mere Anglo-American relations until he had treated of International Anarchy and the

practical consequences of the doctrines of Nationality and Sovereignty! In the thirty-one closely printed pages which stand at the end of his book he appended more than three hundred notes which include perhaps a thousand citations. In other words, he requires his reader to turn more than three hundred times from the body of the text to the body of the notes. Yet so stimulating and diverse are his authorities that it is doubtful whether anyone has read his "English-Speaking Peoples" without observing the procedure inflicted by the technical arrangement of the book. He seems here, as elsewhere, to impose upon others the same discipline of thought and method that he imposed upon himself. It is too severe a demand on the mental habits of most of us. Consequently this book, like his other published writings, is known and will be known to a few only. It is, nevertheless, the most comprehensive survey of the Anglo-American problem that can be had within reasonable compass, and a valuable source of fact and thought for those who care about the Anglo-American future. Though written during the war, and with the war avowedly in mind, it is not an occasional book. It has the quality of permanence.

In his earlier studies Beer discovered and said that the American Revolution was not an epic

struggle in which the hosts of light were arrayed against the powers of darkness; but, like most other wars, was the product of honest differences between honest men pursuing their own political and economic ends according to the light of their generation. There are some people whose patriotism is a shallow thing—so shallow that the facts of their history must be either whitewashed or glorified out of all recognizable relation with the truth. Beer needed no such clap-trap. He could assist at the destruction of the ikons and come away with a stronger faith in his country and with a clearer vision of its true greatness. "Only those will permit their patriotism to falsify history whose patriotism depends on history.

As for this business of "twisting the Lion's tail," Beer regarded it as a perversion of nationalism. He loathed it. In his opinion it was unnecessary for the most powerful state in the world to engage in horseplay in the field of international relations. Serious enough issues were at stake between the United States and Great Britain without muddying the waters of the Atlantic with cheap talk. Some of us can remember his half-humorous proposal at Paris that the British and American delegations should each prepare a "Memorandum of Mutterings," embodying all the grievances and suspicions

entertained by the one against the other. When these had been sworn over, battled over, and clarified, he added, a truly sound basis might be reached from which Anglo-American relations could thereafter proceed. If this suggestion be a recession from the ground of undiluted Americanism, then Beer is in good company; for as far as one can gather, it is precisely the position of the American naval authorities.

It has remained for the psychologist to give a name to the "inferiority complex" which has long colored our relations with the British. "How do you like the United States?" is the question we ask of European visitors while they are still struggling through the customs. "What do you think of our institutions?" was the poser put to Bryce by every chance acquaintance. And we have waited for the answer with a chip trembling on our shoulder. Excessive sensitiveness in receiving criticism joined with excessive readiness to offer it—these are familiar signs to the student of psychology. Thanks to his travel, his reading, and that gift of detachment which is an asset of his race, Beer passed through and beyond this stage of immaturity and, like Walter Page, found the springs of his patriotism in those qualities of greatness which transcend the moment and lie in the very spirit of a nation.

He discovered and said that political progress had been marked by the enlargement of political entities through the voluntary association of those who share a common tradition, language and culture. He envisaged the possibility of "some new unprecedented form of political association, which, though preserving to each part its full freedom, will permanently unite the United States and the British Commonwealth "not only for the defense of their own common civilization and its ideals; but also in support of the liberty of all threatened by the sword of those who worship at the shrine of organized power." He was aware of the strength of the Revolutionary tradition in the teaching of American history, he was conscious of the "separate set of interests" which would always call for separate statehood, he saw the reversion to intense nationalism which has followed the war—a phenomenon which he prophesied in perhaps clearer terms than we who have lived to see it could describe. Yet beyond and in spite of these things he thought he caught the glimmerings of a new relationship between the United States and the British Commonwealth which might come "in the fulness of time." He was not a visionary, but a man of vision; and his long forecast challenges attention because it is his.

* * *

When the shock of the first year of the war was somewhat deadened, the attention of influential people abroad began to be fixed upon the attitude and probable action of the United States. The editors of *The Round Table,* "a quarterly review of the politics of the British Empire,"—all of them familiar with Beer's scholarship, his powers of observation and his judgment—turned to him as the man best qualified to give their limited but powerful circle of readers a trustworthy account of the progress of opinion in the United States. From the day war was declared Beer had felt and had elsewhere written that the place of the United States was by the side of the Allies, in action. He saw the major issue from the first: the trees did not blur his sight of the wood. Yet in spite of these almost passionate convictions, he then began with scrupulous fidelity to chart the slowly rising graph of pro-Ally sentiment in America.

Men who were associated with him in other matters from 1915 to 1918—the few to whom he confided the authorship of his anonymous articles—all speak of the sense of responsibility under which Beer produced his contributions, weighing the traditions of the country, the diversities of its population, its almost congenital hatred of war, its unfamiliarity with the issues either in detail or in the large—all

the factors which so long contributed to postpone the final decision. To those abroad whose eyes swept for a moment from the battlefields to a powerful source of help across the seas, then back to the front again, it must have been fairly maddening to read Beer's cold, measured expositions. Six months after the *Lusitania* went down, with his heart as fervently committed to the cause of the Allies as was Roosevelt's, his head was compelling him to say:

"At present the most vital question, both for the United States and for the future civilization of the world, is whether the sentiments of this majority will be translated into action. Will the United States abandon its policy of self-centered isolation and assume its share of the burden in maintaining 'the public right of the world'? This result may come about either through the voluntary recognition of previously ignored obligations, or under the compulsion of irresistible events, and possibly the traditional policy of aloofness from the affairs of Europe may be continued. *Quién sabe?* Political prophecy is gratuitous folly, as its pitfalls are visible to all. The determining factor will be public opinion, and this opinion will be influenced by the future course of the war and its outcome."

Even though he was writing for a predominantly British audience he did not hesitate to speak his mind. In March 1916 he included an exceedingly frank admonition:

"There is on the whole less admiration for England than at the outset and also a considerable dampening of enthusiasm. Her supporters in America have been more or less

put on the defensive, not so much on account of the blockade of Germany and such failures as the Dardanelles expedition or the Balkan situation, as because of that typical psychological twist that makes the Englishman chary of praise and self-laudation and most articulate in denunciation and self-criticism. . . . When such unrestrained criticism is presented directly to the American public by British writers in American magazines and by British lecturers on American platforms, its effect is trebly pernicious. Such Englishmen, even if their motives be laudable, do an incalculable disservice to the cause of the Allies, and their action has been characterized by many Americans as dastardly."

More spectacular services than Beer's were rendered by other Americans to the cause of victory, but it may be confidently said that no more disciplined spirit was exhibited in the field than by the man who would not swerve one inch from fidelity in reporting the exact color of American opinion. This is no eulogistic exaggeration of the nature and value of his "bit." Mr. Philip Kerr, one of *The Round Table* group, was secretary to Lloyd George during all that time. One may be reasonably sure that Kerr's estimate of Beer's judgment was conveyed to his chief; and if the Prime Minister trusted what Beer wrote, he was never misled into imagining that the reserves of American opinion and physical support were nearer toward the Allied cause than they actually were. Beer did not overestimate the knowledge of his

readers concerning the United States, nor did he underestimate their intelligence. His *Round Table* articles will remain for the discriminating historian of tomorrow what they were for the hard-driven statesmen of the war,—a wise, well-grounded and well-documented record of the development of public sentiment in the United States from 1914 through 1918.

Meanwhile his pen was active in explaining the facts and issues of the war to the American public. When in the fall of 1914 Dr. von Mach stated in the columns of the *New York Times* that Gladstone had declared the Treaty of 1839 (regulating the relations of the contracting powers with Belgium) "to be without force," Beer answered him vigorously out of documents. When Dr. Dernburg at about the same time was making statements designed to undermine American confidence in the integrity of Sir Edward Grey's foreign policy, Beer took up the defense and gave him point for point. In somewhat broader fashion he wrote for the *Forum* on "The War, the British Empire and America," for the *Political Science Quarterly* on "Lord Milner and British Imperialism," and contributed a series of articles to the *New Republic* on "The British Imperial Problem." These articles were propagandist in the widest sense of the word,—that is, they were

designed to clarify the direct and indirect issues of the war to the reader. They were propagandist in the sense that Beer's pen was always found in the service of the cause he knew was right. They were never propagandist in the sense that he falsified facts or distorted them to suit his thesis. He wrote not out of prejudice but out of knowledge, and with a passionate diligence, in the patriotic hope that his effort might somehow contribute toward America's decision to join the common cause. His work was justified by the event; but it would have been justified of itself, for it was his own unique contribution rendered with intelligence and devotion in order to serve what he regarded as the highest interest of his country and of the civilized world. We need a new name for this type of propaganda,—and we need more of it.

Others have spoken of his services as a member of Colonel House's "Inquiry" and as a member of the Peace Conference. But in those two positions his store of ability was drawn upon from so many different sides that his work was only incidentally helpful to a better understanding between the United States and the British Empire. His books on colonial history, his "English Speaking Peoples," and his occasional articles during the war form the main contribution. They represent his

learning,—and it was deep. They represent his faith,—and it was great. Yet in thus being fair to his memory, one is uncomfortably aware of being unfair to the man himself. For he hated the sound of praise of any sort, and would shrink from the only kind of appreciation that we know how to give. One can so well see him finish this book, put it down with a gentle gesture of remonstrance, then step to the library shelf and bring down an old volume: "But be the worke-men what they may be, let us speake of the Worke; that is, the true greatnesse of kingdoms and estates; and the meanes thereof."

V

THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

BY

JAMES T. SHOTWELL

When, in the autumn of 1917, Colonel House, at the request of President Wilson, began to prepare for the Peace Conference by creating a Committee of Inquiry—known generally as The Inquiry —into the questions which were likely to demand settlement at the Conference, it was perhaps inevitable that one of the initial members should be George Louis Beer. The task of the Inquiry was to apply to those problems of international politics, in which the United States had become involved, the tests of scientific research, to measure as far as possible the reality of conflicting claims and to offer suggestions for the new orientation of America. It was a novel experiment; never in the history of the political sciences had there been a greater opportunity for the students of those sciences to help mould instead of merely register events. But the responsibility matched the opportunity.

There was a danger that the inquiry might become a mere academic gesture, unless among its members there were some whose capacity for scholarly research was matched by experience of practical affairs, and whose soundness of judgment had been tried in the disciplines of business experi-

ence. The world was torn between the opposing forces of patriotic determination to win the war and an overwrought idealism which dreamed of an international heaven in a world so long the theater of hate. It was even seriously proposed within the Inquiry itself that its program of study should proceed, not from the known to the unknown, but from the unknown to the known; or in other words that it should first agree upon the ultimate principles to be established in the world and then, investigating where realities were not in harmony with these ideals, prepare for the Peace Conference a program of perfection, one which should bring along the lagging and disparate forces of civilization to universal standards. When one realizes how close to the crucible of history such a specious program got, one can appreciate the service rendered both to scholarship and to public affairs by the sane, clear judgment of the colonial expert of the Inquiry, who never lost his sense of present reality in the consideration of desirable future ends to be attained.

During the year of the Inquiry's existence, Beer devoted himself with single-hearted service to the task in hand. Perhaps fortunately for both himself and the Inquiry he had a great distaste for administrative or office routine and preferred not to hold

any office which distracted him from the consideration of the main issue. He gladly left to others the management of committees or other organizations and worked quietly and alone in his own library, keeping in touch with his colleagues only in so far as his work demanded it. The result was that he not only turned into the files of the Inquiry adequate studies of assigned topics, but he found time as well to think through many problems in fields related to his own, and so to realize perhaps better than those of his colleagues whose work lay in more narrowly specialized fields the essential interdependence of the various parts of the world-settlement.

This is a point to which we shall revert later. In his own research he welcomed the help of colleagues —when they had any to offer; but so sound was his scholarship, so secure his judgment that there is little in his memoranda which can claim joint authorship. Fortunately, the most important of these have been prepared for publication, so that the student of history will be able to trace in the texts themselves the way in which he reached and developed the theories of colonial policy which were to influence so powerfully the settlement at Paris and which mark a distinct step forward, a fundamental gain in the methods of colonial exploitation and government.

To measure the contribution of Beer in the Peace

Settlement, one should therefore first read what he wrote in preparation for the Conference. But these documents, even when compared with those of the Conference itself, by no means tell the whole story. For instance, there is a short memorandum on Mesopotamia, turned in on the 1st of January 1918, which at first reading now, in the light of subsequent information and events, contains nothing very remarkable. But it happens to contain the first project for a "mandate" in the sense in which that term ultimately was used in the Treaty. At least no earlier formulation of the term in this technical sense in which it was finally adopted was known to Beer, then or later. Yet it occurs in a most casual way in a sentence which bears no mark of special emphasis. For Beer had already matured the conception in his own mind, and developed it in discussion so that he did not stress the formula which expressed it. Subsequently he realized the importance of the formula, but it was typical of his scholarly approach to the problem that he himself was more interested in the content of the settlement than in the invention of a slogan for popular understanding even when—as he himself thought—he was the almost unconscious inventor. It was equally typical of his modesty that his associates on the Inquiry

were for the most part ignorant of this and similar contributions.

This is but a single instance of the inadequacy of the documents for forming an idea of the significance of Beer's work during the two years of his life as a technical expert for the American government. And yet a study of these memoranda reveals much of value. It shows, above all, that the method throughout was scholarly and inductive; which is another way of saying that it was thorough in details and open-minded as to conclusions. There is no doubt as to its thoroughness, but its objectivity has been questioned, so we shall deal with that alone.

There were those, even among his associates, who were inclined to discount Beer's opinions in Colonial matters as being "pro-British." They knew of his earnest work during the period of the neutrality of the United States to help remove the misunderstanding between the two great branches of the English-speaking peoples. They knew of his former affiliations with *The Round Table*. But they did not know how it was that George Louis Beer, an American of purely continental European stock had come to this point of view. It was *entirely* a result of a study of the facts. Beer took up the history of the British colonial system as any young American student might take an assigned thesis and work it

out. But with that remarkable gift for getting at the real heart of any question which he took up—an intuition which he schooled by tireless research until its precision became almost uncanny—he broke through traditional interpretations of the way events occurred and learned to weigh the problems of colonial economics and administration, not according to later and sublimated theories but in the light of their own time, with the necessary limitations in outlook which were natural in the given occasion. It was the historian's sympathetic imagination linked with the scientific temper. Studying in this light the later as well as the earlier forms of British colonial policy, he was struck above all by the almost constant evidence of what he held to be the surest test of policy, its adaptation to circumstance. He was as much aware of its shortcomings as anyone, and at Paris was not sparing in criticism where betterment was possible. But he never forgot that in this, as in all other things of life, the best is often the enemy of the good; that an ideal may defeat its own end by sheer idealism. In short the objectivity of Beer's conclusions concerning the British colonial system was proved by his varying judgment upon various parts; but upon the whole he appreciated as few Americans have done, the fact of its naturalness and adjustability, which made it a medium for liberty

when liberty was due. What he lacked was not objectivity but prejudice. And where prejudice, as in this case, was nourished by ignorance, he never lacked the courage to attack it.

As a matter of fact, Beer's first interest in the colonial settlement was not its effect upon any European power, but its effect upon the people in the colony concerned. While he did not believe that this principle should be so blindly applied as to frustrate legitimate plans for colonial development, and never for a moment followed the wild dreams of those who would attempt to apply the formula of "self-determination" to natives of low grade culture or settlements too weak to maintain themselves, he always insisted that the first consideration was the well-being of the population of the colony, and that the interest of the colonizing power was secondary. This will be apparent from a study of his memoranda; but it was as well the keynote to his negotiations in Paris. This alone explains his unwillingness to see the former German colonies returned to their late masters. It explains as well his reluctance to agree to some of the arrangements actually made, and his strong support of the British effort to curtail the arms and liquor traffic in Africa. In short, Beer's colonial policy was genuinely American. If at the same time he found steady support and under-

standing upon the part of those representing the chief colonial power today, that fact itself should furnish a basis for a large degree of mutual understanding between the two branches of the English-speaking peoples. This Beer regarded as of the utmost importance.

* * *

The end of the war came suddenly. The United States, as is well known, had made all its calculations upon another season's campaign. The delirium of Armistice Day was partly due to surprise. No government was ready for it. Thanks to the foresight of the President and of Colonel House, the American preparations for it were at least as adequate as those of the associated powers. For a year "The Inquiry" had been quietly at work, with its corps of specialists analyzing those questions which seemed most likely to arise when the Peace Conference came. But there was also—supposedly—a State Department. The specialists of "The Inquiry" differed from the staff of a Foreign Office in that they had no clue as to the policy which their Government would pursue in given questions,—no clue, that is, beyond the Fourteen Points and the President's public utterances. But what seemed like a handicap turned out, in actual negotiations, to be an advantage. For the data were studied from

every angle, and the preparation was all the more thorough. Cynical journalists jeered when the many boxes of books, maps and papers were unloaded in Paris, but they saw their mistake as the Conference went on, and even admitted it—in private.

The first opportunity of the group of "experts" to compare their conclusions with those which the President was framing into policy came on the voyage over, when Mr. Wilson called them into conference. It is of interest to recall Beer's comment upon that occasion. While fully appreciating the charm of manner, style of expression and largeness of vision of the Chief Executive, he felt that there was an essential weakness in his method of approach, moving from general principles toward the details. It was the very opposite of his own way of working. The President's idea that the German colonies be held in trust for the League of Nations by the small powers, on the theory that they would be disinterested, was one which Beer knew to be unsound from close study of the facts. Similarly, he disagreed with the President's first sketch for a League of Nations, with its Council drawn from the diplomatic staff of small states. His own plan was for periodic Conferences as the center of the organization. We shall refer to these points below; but the inci-

dent involved as well Beer's first essay in diplomacy. For he persuaded one of those at that time close to the President, somewhat against his will, not to urge the President to commit himself further, until he had studied the problem in Paris. It was not the advice most acceptable to the theoretical idealist, with the opportunity apparently at hand to secure a further step in definition before events could block its formation or colleagues in council modify it. But the advice was sound.

Beer's plans for the League of Nations were never formulated in any one memorandum. But those chapters which he wrote criticizing the various methods of international government which had been tried in tropical Africa, constitute careful and exhaustive treatment of that phase of the problem which most directly concerned him, and his own conclusions constitute the basis of a constructive program which, if not fully appreciated at the Peace Conference, is slowly emerging in the storm and stress of the subsequent years as a fundamental element in the structure of international relations, and is bound to play a larger rôle in the future, League or no League.

The idea of a world-parliament seemed to Beer of less importance than that of a system of recurring conferences limited to specific fields. He saw

the inherent weakness in any body that had too wide or miscellaneous a representation. If it was properly representative, the divergent interests of minor groups would block action; if it was dominated by a few great powers, it might increase rather than lessen intrigue. Nor did he feel that even a successful bureaucracy in the League, handling those topics with which the Assembly could not deal, was a satisfactory substitute for an inadequate representative system. There should be established regular periodic conferences in matters of continuing international interest, representing those interested; specific instead of only miscellaneous assemblies. In these all the issues involved should be thrashed out in the open. Intelligent marshalling of expert advice would be brought to clarify and dissolve national prejudices, because the issues would be limited and the arguments directed upon them alone.

The Covenant of the League could have made provision for these conferences with but the addition of a word. But the significance of this suggestion was, as the writer knows from personal experience, not fully realized. Even so open-minded a critic as Lord Robert Cecil feared that it would open a path of international disorder in seeming to invite faddists into conference. But this objection might apply to any conference. The only question really

is whether the machinery for effective action is properly adjusted to the agenda. That is admittedly not the case in a general world-parliament. It would have been the basis of organization in the scheme of limited periodic conferences.

The best example of what is meant here is that which Beer developed in his study of tropical Africa. If the Brussels Conference, which established the rules for the Congo, had arranged for its own re-convening, so that the powers involved—especially Belgium—should automatically report to it in, say, a ten-year period, there would be no difficulty in securing reforms for there would be no derogation of sovereignty involved if one of the parties should give notice of protest. As it was, the Conference of Brussels dissolved without provision for its reassembling, and for one of its members, Great Britain, for instance, to protest against Belgian administration opened a new question with a gesture which might be construed as unfriendly.

Starting with such a definite historical example, Beer elaborated the conception of an automatically recurring conference as a necessary element in securing international cooperation in the colonial sphere. As it happened, the only field in which such a mechanism was set up was in that of International Labour Legislation; but his suggestion for dealing

with tropical Africa by the means which history indicates as natural and expedient may yet supplant the half measures already taken. If not, the problems accumulating rapidly there may lead to international tension, this time between France and Britain, similar to that which marked the so-called Congo atrocities.

This principle of recurring periodic conferences is so large in application, so adjustable to circumstance, so slightly formal in structure, that it bears little resemblance to the constitution of a superstate; and yet if developed as an accepted principle of international law and the conclusions correlated by a unified secretariat, a long step would have been taken toward a society, if not a league of nations. The thoughtful observer of post-war politics must admit that Beer's alternative is one toward which certain large events are tending.

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If Beer's suggestion for stressing the periodic conference as a feature of the League of Nations was not followed out, it should be said that he did little to press it when he saw how things were going. Instead he left it for a colleague to develop the idea and try—unsuccessfully—to secure a hearing for it, and he himself concentrated upon the question of Mandates. When the American Delegation to Ne-

gotiate Peace, as the cumbersome official term ran, was finally organized for work in Paris, Beer was given the title Chief of the Colonial Division. It was a title which always amused him, and he never used the visiting cards which the State Department had printed for each Chief of Division, with the official title on it. There was something unreal, he felt, in the attribution of such a post in the American delegation, with no colonial office behind it; it seemed to suggest the improvisation of parts for an opera, and he disliked intensely all semblance of bluff. But in this instance he was probably in the wrong. The Chief of the Colonial Division for the American Delegation soon acquired a position of influence comparable to that of any minister, and by reason of his preeminent ability, of his mastery of fact, his clear vision in questions of policy, his quick perception of the possibilities and limits of action and above all by his gift for divining what lay in the mind of the negotiators, he made such a place for himself and his government at the council table of his Commission that the representatives of the European colonial offices came to recognize him freely for all that his office claimed and something more. Indeed his chief recognition came from them; and it was often admiration in disagreement.

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We are still too close to the smoke of controversy about the treaty to gauge its importance. But while the main controversy centers upon the interminable question of reparations, almost no attention is paid to the colonial settlement. Yet it should be evident to the student of history that the assignment of the great continent of Africa, in what may easily prove to be relatively final grants to the various European powers which have taken it over, is likely to loom larger and larger in the future as perhaps the most important single feature of the treaty. One's mind goes back to the treaty of Paris of 1763 when the French colonial empire passed into the hands of Britain. To few of that day was given any vision of the potentialities in that transfer. Similarly, at the close of the Napoleonic wars, the gains made by Britain in the far corners of the world were almost unobserved. Yet they were at least as important as who should rule in Parma! Today a similar preoccupation with the European settlement obscures the perspective of the world settlement. It was the latter point of view which Beer kept in mind.

It was pointed out above that the first traceable use in the documents of the Conference of the term "Mandate," in the sense in which it was used in the treaty,—was in Beer's memorandum on Mesopotamia, submitted on the first of January 1918.

During that winter he often discussed with the writer the way in which the mandate system could be developed. But the only formal plan as applied to specific problems which has been found among his papers is in the discussion on experiments in international control in tropical Africa,—the same memorandum which contains the suggestion of the periodic conference. It is greatly to be regretted that relatively little of his conclusions were ever written down. His associates, however, will recall the precision of outline which they had reached in his own mind.

It is impossible to discuss here all the details of the colonial problem. In general, however, it should be recalled that there were three possible courses to follow. The German colonies could be returned to Germany; they could be assigned as the prize of war among the victors; or they could be placed under some form of international control, presumably the League of Nations. Beer did not think it fair to those natives in territory occupied by the Allies who had compromised themselves in the eyes of Germany to turn them back to the tender mercies of their former masters; he also judged it inexpedient if not impossible to deprive the Dominion of South Africa of the security which its extended frontiers now gave it; and he was ready to grant

some weight to the claims of the Allies for reparation through the colonial transfer. He therefore accepted as inevitable the refusal to return the colonies to Germany.

The second alternative was equally ruled out by the program of President Wilson. Peoples were not to be transferred from one State to another without some limitation upon the power of the recipient and an international guarantee of the rights of those concerned.

The third alternative was therefore accepted in principle, but it proved to be one of those principles which is determined by its application. The captured colonies should be divided among the conquerors, but they should hold them as mandates from the League of Nations. At once the question arises, who was to be the sovereign, the League or the mandatory state? If, for instance, the League were to make up financial deficits in the mandated colonies' budgets, as Mr. Wilson suggested in the first discussion of the question at Paris (Committee of "The Ten" January 17), it was acting in the capacity of a super-state and its supervisory power, which Mr. Wilson wished to emphasize, would extend far beyond the limits acceptable to any competent or native mandatory. Beer notes in his diary that the speeches made upon this occasion were

"rhetorical, inaccurate and not to the point" until the British representatives pointed out the need for varying the terms of the mandates to suit local conditions. That was the starting point for progress. But it was Mr. Wilson who made the progress really possible; for, two days later when coming out of the meeting of The Ten, in which there had been disagreement as to matters of fact, he suggested to Beer that the experts should get together and come to some agreement in their reports before questions arose in the Supreme Council. This was the beginning of a policy of re-coordination which transformed the whole conference, for it not only led to joint committees of experts, it brought the appointment of experts to commissions which themselves drafted large sections of the treaty. Just how this was done we are not concerned with here; but full advantage was taken of the President's hint!

To return to the mandates. The first ones actually discussed were those which were to go to South Africa and to Australia and New Zealand. The reason for this was that these Dominions had their representatives present and at once raised objections to a proposal which at first looked like a filching away of their war-gains. The result was much discussion and little progress. It is interesting, therefore, to find Beer clearly anticipating

this difficulty two weeks before when he notes in his diary the correct method of negotiation. The first of the German colonies to be dealt with, he says, should be those Pacific Islands north of the equator, which were to go to Japan. There would be universal agreement about the limitations to be placed upon this transfer. Then, when the principle had been admitted in actual negotiation, which was much different from admitting it as an ideal, the dominions in the Southern Pacific would have to follow suit—with suitable reservations. Then South Africa would be taken up, and still further reservations made on account of its contiguous territory. In this way one could proceed easily and naturally toward a sound settlement. Unfortunately, matters were left instead to the varying pressures of events and personalities, and Mr. Hughes, the premier of Australia, was never reconciled to the concessions demanded of him. It should be added, however, that Mr. Wilson, untouched by these pressures and so late as the twenty-first of March (1918), was proposing that the commission which was to draw up the mandates should first determine the terms for the various mandates before the territories were assigned to the mandatory powers. In this way he hoped to secure more disinterested treatment of the colony. But even from the standpoint of the colony,

the nature of its safeguards depended in part upon the choice of its sovereign; for the proposed arrangement was in the nature of a contract, and both parties had to be considered if it were to be effectively carried out. In addition, as the mandatories and not the mandated states were the negotiators, they could not agree upon a settlement until the matter was taken up from the other end. Beer felt that there was much to be said for their contention since it brought the different questions to a final settlement and one could adjust the safeguards to real conditions and so assure their execution. Beer's ideas concerning the system of mandates coincided in general with what was embodied finally in the League of Nations—although the wording in the Covenant quite lacks the clarity of his own phrasing. But he was by no means satisfied with the actual settlement of the colonies under the scheme. In the first place he believed that America should share in the responsibility which she imposed upon others. This might come about by either the assignment to America of a former German colony—say the Cameroons—or by interpreting the American interests in Liberia in the light of a responsibility before the world. The first of these possibilities—that of our taking the Cameroons—soon revealed its utter impossibility, but it should be men-

tioned now in passing to show how far away from subsequent tendencies were even some of the clearest-sighted men of that day. The flush of promise had not yet faded from all our war-time ideals. But with Liberia the case was different. There we already had obligations, and if we were to insist that France, England, Belgium and Italy should be responsible to the League of Nations for their trusteeship in the case of the lands they held in Africa, there was much force in the contention that the power which stood behind the oligarchical negro government of Liberia should be in some degree answerable as well to the same international supervision. This argument was enforced by the common charge that the existing government of Liberia was notoriously corrupt; a charge which, true or not, placed the United States in an invidious light so long as it seemed to shield the native government from the very kind of oversight which it was imposing upon others. On the other hand, no finer example of colonial administration exists in the world than in the adjacent territory of British Nigeria. The contrast was sure to be in the background of the negotiations. Beer realized that, in the general ignorance upon the subject, the American government could not count upon any support either in the Senate or in public opinion for a change of our pol-

icy of financial support and protection of Liberia into a mandate, and he sought to secure reform by treaty instead; but he realized as well that, not only in logic but in fact, our refusal to enter the international arrangement weakened our whole influence in the African settlement.

The Liberian situation was made still more difficult by the narrow, provincial outlook of some of the American negotiators. Beer registered his irritation in his diary with those uncritical minds which accept rumors at face value and keep alive spiteful gossip about their neighbors. Such men "make a decent international future almost hopeless." No one was more jealous of America's honor than Beer. But he wanted the reality, not the mere grandiloquent assertion of it by self-righteous patriots. Such jingoism not only lowered the prestige it was intended to exalt, but blocked the path of a just settlement. This was true of much more than the Liberian incident in Paris; it was and perhaps still is a conviction shared by several highly placed in the American delegation that the motives of all but Americans were questionable. It was true that America was the one disinterested party; but it was a strange distortion of idealism to regard all the settlements of interested parties as essentially unfair. Such an attitude really betrays, as Beer noted,

as narrowly journalistic a spirit upon the part of the critic as upon the part of the criticized. America could only be effective in enforcing its point of view by sympathetic study and understanding of the actual situation. To fall back upon general formulae which neither history nor present experience had ever tested, and force them upon others without assuming responsibility for the results was, in the eyes of the patient, a singularly pharisaical proceeding with which Beer could have no sympathy.

* * *

The other two elements in the African settlement in which America was perforce involved were in Egypt and Morocco, where the capitulations in the one case and the Algeciras Act in the other had secured American interests. With reference to Egypt, Beer was opposed to American interference in the quarrel of the nationalists over the British protectorate, and saw no end to the Peace Conference if every protesting element from all the corners of the world were to be listened to. But he held that American treaty rights should be formally acknowledged in the new settlement. Indeed his study of Egypt which he prepared in the form of a memorandum concentrates attention upon the case of the foreign investor; which was the necessary point of approach of the American government. In Paris

he drafted the pertinent clauses to safeguard American rights in Egypt and notes in his diary that the British did not at all resent his offering these clauses but on the contrary were grateful for the suggestions. This is a point of some importance historically. Similarly, in the case of Morocco, Beer was careful not to lose sight of the principle of the "open door" in the revision of the conditions of the French protectorate. This was one of his most difficult tasks, as it involved the modification of the policies of France in one of its most important interests. Beer's solution was not to abrogate the Algeciras Act but to abolish the international administration. This was in harmony both with historical precedent, America being involved, and with his own convictions as to the inherent weakness of international administration, as shown in his work upon Central Africa. But Beer did not wish the matter to be left at this stage. He was determined not to gloss over difficulties and call it a settlement; and he felt that in standing for a policy of "an open door" America should offer something more than a general principle. The problem should be thought through and the solution made applicable to situations where existing rights and claims could not be dismissed on the ground of a new world-order. He doubted the revolutionary element in the new demands, and

sought to adjust the particular settlement to the particular claims involved. This does not mean that he ever forgot the fundamentals of American policy. He was firmly convinced that "the open door" was an essential for peace and therefore it was essential to have it established and recognized in the Peace of Versailles. But he wanted it defined, and by a definition he meant something more than a single formula. His work upon this remained unfinished; had he been able to complete it, it would have contributed much to clarify issues which were bound to arise so long as the exact measure of American insistence upon the doctrine was in doubt, and so long as American interests failed adequately to make allowance for previous commitments and existing rights of other nations. The correspondence between the British and American governments in 1920 over the alleged oil concessions in the mandated territory of Mesopotamia would not have reached the tension which it did, had there been a clearer understanding upon such matters in the settlement. It was to forestall such incidents—which he foresaw as certain to arise if matters were left to drift—that Beer attempted to frame a really workable policy in place of, yet embodying, the general principle.

Much of the subsequent work of Beer was di-

rected along these lines. It was relatively easy to draft clauses in the treaty with Germany which should secure its renunciation of colonies, but the real problem was a positive, not a negative one. It was the upbuilding of the new international régime in the conquered territories, most of which were to be held as mandates. He regarded the Treaty of Versailles as but a beginning of a long series of agreements, which would ultimately furnish the world with standards of international policy applicable in detail because variable to the circumstances and yet maintaining the point of view which, after all, found its first general recognition at Paris. It was this problem which, after the Conference was over, drew him on into the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations.

* * *

In no part of his work in Paris was Beer happier than in his negotiations with the Italian delegation. For many years a careful student of Italian art and history, his knowledge of the people and their language led him to take an interest in their claims at Paris. He had felt even during the war that somehow the Italians had failed in getting their case before the American people. The Treaty of London, which had been held up to almost universal denunciation as imperialism in its crudest form, never

seemed to him such an atrocious act. It called for the inclusion within the frontiers of Italy of territory mostly inhabited by Italians which would secure Italy strategically and so lessen its heavy military establishment. He did not accept the exact line, especially in the Tyrol, but the general exception of the treaty seemed to him but fair to Italy in view of the sacrifices it was asked to make and expedient in view of its expanding population. He therefore went to Paris without an anti-Italian bias. In Paris he found the Italians "pursuing the same stupid policy of reticence, with the result that everyone regarded them with suspicion." It was even hard for the heads of other delegations to learn what they wanted in the colonial sphere. This was a situation which, Beer felt, might result in permanent mischief, for if the treaty were to be drawn up ignoring the proper claims of Italy, the country would tend to fall back to the central group of states and the old balance of power might reappear in another guise. When things had drifted along this course for weeks, Beer secured from the Italians a complete statement of their claims in an official memorandum. So far as the colonies went, Beer felt that it was more modest than the claims of some of their critics and he helped to secure contact for the negotiators. One incident in this connection may be

cited. He would have liked to see their Red Sea holding rounded out by the addition of the port of Jibuti held by the French, because of its use as a center for the arms and liquor traffic for the natives. This would have involved giving compensation to France elsewhere, perhaps in Gambia. Beer spent much labor on this point but in vain. Failure, however, gave an added zest to his work on the arms traffic convention, to which we refer above.

It is impossible to leave the question of the Italian claims at Paris without reference to the Fiume dispute. Both Beer and the writer (who was inadvertently drawn into the initial phases of the controversy) felt that attention had been concentrated too narrowly upon the single issue and that the question could not be solved by concentration upon local questions of demography. The issue was of large significance solely because it involved matters of general policy; and should be approached from that angle. Moreover Beer felt strongly that an attitude of aloofness which prevented any negotiator from learning what another really was prepared to offer was a mistake, and that the American specialists in this instance could have made real progress had they dealt directly with the Italians and not solely with the Jugo-Slavs. On the other hand there was some resentment upon the part of the specialists at what

seemed like an interference with a local geographical problem by one from another field, especially as it was at the same time involved with a delicate question of responsibilities within the delegation. Beer thought so little in terms of administrative organization, working as he always did, so much by himself, that he failed to note at first the attitude of the colleagues who objected; and was left much in the dark about it at first. He was therefore much surprised to learn that they had appealed directly to the President to follow only one line of advice. The appeal succeeded only too well. It confirmed the President in his policy as expressed almost immediately in the letter to Italy. It would have been pleasanter to have passed this incident by in silence; but its historical consequences were too vast.

One incident led to another. The Shantung dispute followed as a natural result. For it was Japan's opportunity to present its case, almost like an ultimatum, when Italy was away and the President's position weakened. Here again, Beer's advice was sound, and he did not hesitate to take a part in the negotiations in the effort to secure a just settlement. Recognizing the difficulty of securing assent to the American policy in the Orient at such a juncture,—a policy of sympathetic help for China,—he urged the Chinese to follow Fabian tactics of delay until

Mr. Wilson's position at the Conference was stronger. Instead, they took up the challenge of Japan when it was thrown down. It is a question which, as Beer saw, depended upon more than abstract rights for its solution. He suggested meeting the exigency with caution and awaiting the favorable occasion to gain a point. Something more could have been done in this way to extract concessions from Japan.

But what interests us here is to understand how it was that Beer became, as he did become, one of the chief factors in the other negotiations than those of the colonial settlement. It should be recalled, as noted above, that the field in which he worked, included the whole of the peace settlement outside Europe. While apparently geographically concentrating upon Africa, it covered every variety of question. Its scope was as broad as politics itself, including questions of geography in the readjustment of the map, of economics in colonial trade and the statistics of exploitation and colonial investments, of government in the consideration of guarantees for native rights and international privileges. All of these problems had their roots as much in Europe as in Africa or the South Seas; one looked to Berlin rather than to the Cameroons for the clue to the policy of German West Africa,

to the prestige of Italy rather than the value of Tripoli hinterlands. Hence tracing these interests through the knotty skein of European diplomacy, Beer found himself brought from colonial to foreign office as it were, and so was able to approach problems other than colonial from a new point of view. Beer felt strongly that the gathering of mere local geographical data, essential as it was for a beginning, was after all but the beginning for a study of politics. He would heartily agree that the *study* of the problems should be based upon an intimate survey of local circumstances; but the *solution,* in terms of actual negotiation, would have to include all those tangential elements which often come into it incidentally but which when expressed in terms of national policy of interested states change the whole basis of agreement. In other words, he was prepared to recognize imponderables in politics and was as opposed to academic exclusiveness as he had been to those amateurs who sought to rationalize the world according to their own preconceptions. It was a point of view which is sure to be misunderstood by those who think of peace treaties as a series of isolated items; but history will show that where the Paris Conference chiefly failed was just in the matter of adding one section to another and calling it a whole. The purely

local problem of Fiume involved the purely local problem of Shantung!

Realizing these things, Beer went ahead wherever he felt that he could contribute essentially. There were greater questions at stake than the *amour propre* and though no one was ever more sensitive to friendship than George Louis Beer, or more inherently modest and self-effacing by temperament, he was still more sensitive to duty; and where it called he went ahead.

* * *

It is naturally not possible to give here a detailed narrative of Beer's activities throughout those busy months at Paris. In addition to the arduous task of satisfying all parties by an agreement over Liberia which would not lessen American influence in the general settlement when the negotiations passed from the preliminary stage into that of commissions, Beer's skill in actually drafting the clauses became generally recognized and his judgment was sought on all kinds of questions. He was a member of the Commission to revise the General Acts of Berlin of 1885 and of Brussels of 1890, the Commission to revise the Convention on the Liquor Traffic in Africa, the Commission on the Convention relative to the Traffic in Arms and Munitions in Africa, the Commission on Morocco, the Commis-

sion on the German Colonies, and finally as alternate for Colonel House, he sat on the Mandate Commission which proceeded to put the treaty into effect. It was almost inevitable, perhaps, that when the Secretariat of the League of Nations was set up, he should be asked to take charge of the Mandate Division. Reluctantly he accepted, and prepared to devote himself to that task. It was a distinct compliment to America, that although it had accepted no mandate, the office of Commissioner should come to its colonial expert. But by this time Beer's genius had been recognized by the governments which had most at stake, and his soundness of judgment was respected by all.

But the recognition which had come to him brought but little personal satisfaction; for it meant drawing him farther and farther away from the life he loved—that of a scholar, and keeping him in the turmoil of public life. In this, in spite of his success, he was never happy. He was anxious to be of service but ready to go home when no longer needed. He was bored by the unrealities of diplomacy, the mixture of pomposity and hollow protestations on the part of minor people, and annoyed when those in responsibility transacted great affairs without an apparent sense of the full consequences. In fact the Conference was often

on his nerves. He was as he wrote "not one of those who feel a fictitious importance by being connected with or even by taking part in big things." The game was not his metier. This dislike of the job was not due to discouragement for his recommendations were virtually adopted as he wanted them to be done. But he disliked the indirect methods, the interminable delays of negotiation and reference. "No government department," he noted, ever says "yes," but "they are inclined to concur." "It is a constant process of shirking responsibility." He was pessimistic too about the outcome. He was "afraid that they were going to make a peace that would be far from a real one, and that a fresh outbreak would be inevitable within our own lifetime." The fundamental trouble was that the whole world was seething and that no matter what they might write on paper, no real settlement was possible. The war intensified national feelings, and these passions must subside before reason could play its part. Certain small nations were much worse in this respect than the large ones. Freedom and independence were being overdone; sovereignty was invoked as an excuse for erecting water-tight frontiers with resultant international friction and the threat of petty wars, and petty wars involved great ones. Beer lacked that tendency to idealize

small nations which has been so distinct an element in the American outlook. Similarly, he disagreed with the popular demand for complete publicity in negotiation, and the establishment of the Committee of The Four gave him some satisfaction, as it lessened the opportunity for wasteful speechmaking, and promised results. His judgment upon this method of procedure was not without reserves, but in it, as in all else, there was a sturdy independence in which prejudice plays no rôle. This is a trait most evident in his criticism of French policy. He had very keen sympathy with France, but thought its policy in some regards singularly short-sighted.* He also disagreed with the Polish settlement. With his intense feeling for realities he did not forget that although Germany was absent it would still have to be reckoned with. With these things in his mind although the colonial settlement was made exactly in accord with his own suggestions—as the documents prove—yet he was frankly critical of the work of the Conference as a whole, but from

*In one of his letters he summed up his judgment as follows: "Europe is an elastic ball, whose shape has been determined by intricate historical forces. Its present form is due to outside forces, British and American. Once remove them or even alter the relative strength greatly, and the tendency will be inevitably to revert to the natural shape. Instead of relying upon the sympathy and support of British and American opinion—their sole bulwark,—France has tried to create a series of military states in Eastern Europe—Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, and Jugo-Slavia. As yet they are mere potentialities, not realities."

a different angle than that of current American opinion. Whatever faults the treaty had, he had no sympathy with the political opposition to it at home and still less with that of the group of irreconcilable liberals who played into the hands of the obstructionist partisans. He believed that the very imperfections of the treaty made the League of Nations all the more necessary.

* * *

Such, in briefest outline, is a sketch of the work at Paris of George Louis Beer. It was the work of a statesman rather than of a scholar, for it revealed that largeness of vision which mere scholarship sometimes obscures. And yet he used throughout the instruments and processes of the scholar. There was no guesswork in his method. He analyzed the data with indefatigable care; but he had so mastered the technique that he worked with amazing rapidity and had so clear insight into the problems that he never fumbled into blind alleys, where so much of the effort of scholarship is often wasted.

But his success was due to something more intimate than the acquisition of a sure touch in the intricacies of statecraft. Those who at Paris learned to admire his great gifts, and who looked forward to the services which he might render in

the trying days ahead, are conscious of the loss which his country and the world have suffered by his death. But character is after all more than achievement. He won the confidence of men as much by his sympathetic understanding as by his insight into their problems. And he understood because he was inherently modest and sincere. Those who knew him best knew how true those qualities were; how honest he was with himself and his friends. If friendship be the final test he met it loyally but with open mind. And the best tribute that his friends can now offer to his memory is to state simply and frankly, and critically if need be, how he faced the problems of life, whether in scholarship or in public affairs. It is only in such a setting that the narrative of his work in Paris, of which this chapter is but a fragment, gains its full meaning.

PART TWO

APPRECIATIONS

I

BY

LORD MILNER

I HAVE been asked to contribute my own reminiscences of George Louis Beer to the Memorial Volume to him which I am glad to know is being written. Unfortunately our direct acquaintance was of only short duration but it has left in my mind the recollection of a very remarkable and attractive personality. Though he was already well-known to me by his writings and his reputation, I never actually met Beer before the commencement of the peace negotiations at Paris in the beginning of 1919, and I saw him for the last time in London in August of the same year. During these six or seven months, however, I saw a great deal of him both officially and privately, and had come to base great hopes,—frustrated, alas, by his untimely death—on the influence which he might exercise in directing opinion in his own country towards a sound attitude on questions of world policy. At that time, of course, it was impossible to foresee that America would dissociate herself as completely as she has done from the effort to bring some order into the European chaos. We still looked upon her as destined to exercise a moderating and a clement influence in the settlement of the many problems

which the war had left, but which it was impossible for the nations devastated by the war, and still distracted by the passions and the bitter memories of that long life and death struggle, to approach with the calm and the far-sightedness which are essential to constructive statesmanship. For the solution of those problems a mind like Beer's was fitted to give most valuable aid. He had the breadth of view, the sound judgment, and above all the patient and conciliatory temper, which were needed in the work of harmonising divergent interests and evolving a settlement calculated to endure.

Such at least was the impression which he made upon us, whether in discussing academically the great issues which confronted the representatives of the Allied Nations in Paris, or in the practical discharge of the duties allocated to him in the negotiations connected with the Treaty of Peace. He was the American member of a committee, of which I was Chairman, appointed to draw up the mandates under which the administration of the former German Colonies and of the territories taken from Turkey was to be conducted by the several mandatory powers. Owing to various causes of delay, the mandates for the ex-Turkish countries—Syria, Mesopotamia, and Palestine, were not settled by that Committee. Our actual work was confined

to drafting mandates—subsequently approved by the Council of the League of Nations—for the future government of the former German Colonies. In the elaboration of these drafts, which presented many points of difficulty, Beer played a very helpful part, and his influence contributed materially to the smoothness and expedition of our proceedings. He was a firm believer in the mandatory principle and always leaned in favour of provisions calculated to emphasise the trusteeship of the mandatory powers and to safeguard the interests of the native races committed to their care. But his practical good sense was opposed to any attempt to bind the mandatories by rigid rules in the exercise of their authority. He realized that it was necessary to trust the good faith of the mandatory powers and to the influence of the public opinion of the world, instructed by the periodical reports which they were bound to furnish to the League of Nations to ensure the proper observance of the general principles clearly enough laid down in the terms of the mandates, though these left room for a reasonable latitude of interpretation.

Apart from his engaging personality, what most attracted me in my intercourse with Beer was his great knowledge of the history and sympathetic interest in the development of the British Empire.

No foreigner that I have ever met, not even an American, had a juster appreciation of the aims of British Imperialists of what I may call the modern school. Not uncritical of our methods—though his friendly criticism was always devoid of offence—he was convinced of the sincerity of our purposes. The ideal of the "Commonwealth of Nations," the free union of the self-governing States of the Empire, appealed to him very strongly. But his interest was not confined to that side of our Imperial problem. He was equally alive to the importance of the "Dependent Empire," about which he was very well-informed, and he had evidently given much thought to the question of its future development. He well understood the growing difficulties which beset the British nation in the government of so many alien races in the most various stages of civilisation, and appreciated the spirit in which we were trying to carry "the white man's burden." He hoped, I think, that his own country would in future take a greater share in that burden, and make itself responsible for the peace and progress of some of the darker corners of the world. I am not sure, but I am inclined to believe, that he favoured the proposal, which very unfortunately, as I think, came to nothing, that the United States should become one of the mandatory powers. Had that course

been followed, it would, as it seems to me, have averted the disasters which have since befallen the unfortunate Christian peoples of the Near East, in whom America has always taken so strong an interest, and in particular have made impossible the disgraceful abandonment of the Americans. But, be that as it may, there is no doubt that Beer had a strong sense of the duty which the more advanced nations owe to the more backward, and that he looked for the cooperation of the United States and the British Empire in the discharge of it. If I am right in that conception of his views, his own country is not the only sufferer by the loss of a man of his great knowledge, broad humanity, and enlightened spirit.

II

BY

ARTHUR J. GLAZEBROOK

THE influence of a great personality does not die. As the months draw on into years since the day on which George Louis Beer passed away the memory of him does not fade. In all stages of the world's history it has been true that really distinguished minds were rare; probably it must always be so. Those men and women who think deeply about public affairs, and especially about international affairs, and are able through the medium of oratory to appeal directly to large masses of people, are uncommon, and in most cases the possession of the very gifts which make them orators detracts from the simplicity and directness of their thinking. Those few people who preserve throughout their lives a certain cool detachment of mind are rarely orators, and so it happens that the source of a large part of the best thinking in the world is hidden from all except the relatively small number of people who have the privilege of their friendship. Propaganda and "uplift" and all the rest of the machinery by which the substitute for ideas is promulgated through the public, are at best secondary processes and can only deal with thoughts and suggestions the origin of which has been the secret of a few.

I think we have all discovered with some occasional surprise the existence of not infrequent

groups of people, small and perhaps secluded, who do some consecutive thinking in the quiet of their own little gatherings; and it is impossible to overestimate the importance of such associations which, while relieving the individual from the disadvantages of thinking alone, deliver him from the confusion of mass influences. It is from groups such as these that there have arisen men whose thoughts have moved the world.

Not associated solely with any one group, but moving from one to another with quiet distinction and leaving a mark on each, George Louis Beer throughout his life was continuously influencing other men who were trying to do what they could in the active pursuits of public life or in the scientific study of history and politics. A relation such as his to life must always be rare. The affection and respect so freely accorded him by all with whom he was associated, whether intimately or only by way of acquaintance, were the natural reward of the possession of a simple, selfless and detached personality, gifted with great intellectual power, an astonishing memory, and a singular grasp of scientific method.

His own intimate life, as seen by a friend to whom he generously accorded some affectionate interest, was one of quiet and slightly humorous steadiness.

Like most considerable people he was contented to be often alone with his books and his thoughts. Whatever may be the truth of the idea of a spiritual possession with which many good people endow the physical structure of a house or a room, at least it was true that as one entered George Louis Beer's house one seemed to be greeted at the door with a benison; and on arriving at his study, situated in a quiet and remote part of the house, the feeling was one of peace, the peace of noble thought. Many hours have I spent with him in the stimulating quiet of his study, where intellectual movement had the strength that makes it restful, where all mental effort was directed towards the simple idea of reaching truth, and where personal ambition was so conspicuously absent as to seem almost an absurdity: all this governed by a selfless and affectionate sympathy for any efforts of others in whatever made for public good.

While George Louis Beer found it an embarrassment even to think of speaking in public, no one could be more effective than he in talking to a group of moderate dimensions made up of people of receptive minds. Rarely assertive, he was always convincing, and unconsciously dominated his associates by his quiet force of character and the simple, un-

faltering directness with which he put his finger on the essentials.

The deepest enthusiasm of Beer's life was that for pure scholarship. An important and successful business experience in his youth and the acquisition of an adequate competency gave him the background necessary for the satisfaction of this enthusiasm for learning. Perhaps if the Great War had not occurred he might not have stepped into the arena of public or international affairs, spending his life usefully in the acquisition of knowledge and the writing of stimulating studies on the period of history which he had selected. Instead of that the knowledge that he had acquired gave him a full understanding of the deep significance of the world war, of the vast issues involved, and of the great part in the settlement of a broken world that might be taken by the English-speaking peoples. I have often thought that the greatest Englishman of the nineteenth century was, after all, Abraham Lincoln. In this sense Beer, too, was a great Englishman, and the loss involved in his death was a heavy one, not only to the world and to America but also to England.

The formation of the House Commission was a fine idea. It envisaged the orderly application of the best of the country's scholarship to a problem

requiring all the wisdom available; and if scholarship is not the road to wisdom, what is it? The scholar in international affairs is not a new phenomenon. The whole class in England which, by the accident of birth has also been the inheritors of the best that England has to offer in education, has naturally found occupation in public affairs and especially in diplomacy. No corner of England has contributed so many statesmen as Oxford and Cambridge.

There is something modern, something not dependent upon class, and something associated with conscious collective wisdom of a great nation in Wilson's conception of a peace whose incidents were explored by a group of the best scholars of the country. It fits in with the ideal of a democracy choosing its best to do the most difficult of all tasks, and after all the most difficult tasks of humanity have in the last analysis to be performed by a very few, and they must be chosen spirits. But they must not be remote from the instincts and feelings of what Abraham Lincoln loved as the "common man." In this group of wise men one likes to think of Beer, a nature calm and meditative, warmed by fires that burned fiercely against wrong alone, thinking little of himself, much of his friends, and altogether devoted to the service of mankind.

III

BY

GLENN FRANK

The untimely death of George Louis Beer took out of the intellectual life of the United States a type of mind we could ill afford to lose, a mind graced by rare scholarship, prompted by the instinct of statesmanship, and dedicated to the constructive interpretation of America's international relations and responsibilities, particularly respecting the rest of the English-speaking world.

Mr. Beer was neither the typical academic historian nor the typical politician; but his grasp of history saved him from the temptations of jingoism, opportunism, and narrow nationalism. It was this which especially qualified him to serve as Colonial expert for the American Commission to Negotiate Peace at Paris. Among the innumerable technical delegates at Paris Mr. Beer won an influence and standing that was unique by virtue of his profound grasp of the history and the economic problems involved in the Colonial adjustment. He was so plainly master of the tangled facts of the colonial problem that it was a foregone conclusion that Sir Eric Drummond, Secretary-General of the League of Nations, would, as he did, ask him to take charge of that most difficult section of the League—the

Mandate Section. America's abstention from the League prevented Mr. Beer's acceptance of this post.

Mr. Beer was in no sense a radical, but he was endowed with a sense of political and economic realities and animated by an intuitive appreciation of the just and the workable that fitted him, as few men are fitted, for the higher politics. His historical writings won the highest approval of such critics as Lecky. He was for a time prize lecturer in European history at Columbia University, but he spent ten years in active business, thereafter devoting himself to writing. Since 1903 he spent much time in research and produced, in four volumes, the history of the British colonial system from 1578 to 1765. These four volumes were awarded in 1913 the first Loubat Prize as the best work published in the English language during the preceding five years on the history, geography, or archaeology of America. Had he lived he would soon have carried these studies down into the 19th century.

During the war he regularly contributed to the *Round Table* a survey of American politics that was always marked by a broad grasp of facts and a refreshing sanity of interpretation. In 1917 he published his "*The English Speaking Peoples: Their Relations and Joint International Obligations.*" This volume was a well-documented and closely

reasoned examination of the possibilities of co-operation between England and the United States. In our young and business-obsessed Republic we produce too few men like George Louis Beer, men of sound scholarship with an abiding sense of public responsibility. I am happy to offer this tribute to a friendship I valued, to a man whose death was a distinct loss to the higher political life of our country. I shall never cease to regret that he did not live to bring his singularly rich gifts to, say, the Secretaryship of State, or to the Ambassadorship at the Court of St. James.

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IV

BY

OSCAR S. STRAUS

(From the *Authors' Club Manual,* 1922)

In the death of George Louis Beer, America has lost one of her foremost publicists and specialists in Colonial history. He died in his forty-eighth year in the City of New York on March 15, 1920. After graduating from Columbia University in 1892 he entered his father's export-and-import business where he became familiar, by practical experience, with the economics of domestic and foreign commerce.

As often happens with persons of distinct aspirations and talent, it required some time for him to find a proper channel to give expression to his ideals and purposes. While still connected with his father's commercial firm he became a lecturer on European history at Columbia University from 1893 to 1897. In the first of these years he published his first work: *"The Commercial Policy of England Toward the American Colonies."* It was a distinct contribution in that unexplored field of American history, and won high praise from critics in both countries, among others, from the great philosophical historian, Lecky. From that time forward his career as an historian was determined, and he gave himself to it with enthusiastic

thoroughness and singular determination. His next book, which appeared in 1902, is entitled, "Cromwell's Policy in its Economic Aspects." The next few years were spent in research among documents, mainly in the British Record Office, with the result that from 1907 to 1912 he was able to publish in four substantial volumes the history of the British Colonial system from 1578 to 1765. For this work he was awarded in 1913 the first Loubat Prize as the best work published in the English language during the preceding five years on the history, geography, or archæology of America.

For a few years after the beginning of the World War he interested himself in the work of *The Round Table,* the newly established British Quarterly for closer relations between England and America. He contributed regularly a survey of American politics, which series of articles admirably served the purpose he had in view of interpreting our country to Great Britain in a clear, convincing, and authoritative way. His great interest in the subject led him to publish in 1917 his "English Speaking Peoples," a carefully reasoned survey of the benefits that would result to both countries and to civilization by the close cooperation between England and America.

In 1918 Mr. Beer was appointed to the position

of Colonial Expert to the American Commission to Negotiate Peace at Paris. In this capacity his past studies admirably qualified him for his high duties, and his extraordinary grasp of the history and economic problems involved, won for him a unique influence and standing among his technical colleagues in the Conference, a tribute no less to his learning and ability than to the charm of his character and personality. Because of his admirable and thorough work in this special field, as soon as the secretariat of the League of Nations was authorized, the Secretary-General appointed him to administer one of the most, if not the most, difficult sections of the League—the Mandate Section. On account, however, of America not becoming a member of the League he was unable to accept it. A writer in the London *Times* of April 7, 1920, who shows himself thoroughly familiar with Beer's historical work, and as expert on the commission, says of him: "The loss which American historiography suffers from his premature death is small compared with the loss to international affairs. Few men now living could bring to the solution of international problems such a combination of scholarly analysis, keen insight, and correct appraisal of the imponderable forces of history."

He had the calm, forceful, and chiselled face of a Roman philosopher. His great attainments lay hidden beneath a genuinely modest reserve that bordered on shyness, and a personality that was singularly attractive and sympathetic.

V

THE ROUND TABLE

(From *The Round Table,* September, 1920.)

The Round Table is so much of a co-operative venture that it would not be easy, even if it were deemed desirable, to draw aside the veil of anonymity which surrounds its writers. But in George Louis Beer, who died in New York on March 15, 1920, not only this magazine but the world of scholarship and of affairs on both sides of the Atlantic have lost a worker whose name deserves to be known and honoured far beyond the circle of those who came into actual touch with his work.

Born in America, of parents of Continental origin, Beer spent the first ten years of his active life in business, acquiring a practical training and experience which were of inestimable value to him in his later work. In 1903 he decided to devote himself to intellectual pursuits and first turned his attention to the early history of the American colonies. His studies led him to the Record Office in London, where from 1903 onwards he spent a great deal of time examining the contemporary records of the period which led to the American Revolution. The result of his researches was epoch-making. It is but the bare truth to say that he was mainly responsible for cutting the taproot of falsehood from which the so-called histories of Bancroft,

Trevelyan and the manuals used in the primary schools of America have sprung. It was during this period that he acquired a knowledge of British institutions as thorough as that possessed by any other American. The most modest of men, he was known only to a small circle of admiring friends, but no one was better qualified to act as an interpreter between the American and British communities. Britain and her Allies had no firmer friend. Owing no doubt partly to the fact that his father was a member of the Jewish community in Hamburg, he was thoroughly familiar with German political conditions and intellectual methods, and this made him a formidable antagonist for the German propagandists in the United States. On one occasion at a luncheon in New York, when Herr Dernburg was travestying the British Constitution, Beer, with his greater knowledge, rose and fearlessly confuted him.

It was in their efforts to understand the causes which led to the disruption of the British Commonwealth in the eighteenth century that *The Round Table* groups first came into touch with Beer through his publishers. From that moment onwards he developed the deepest and most sympathetic interest in their researches, and soon agreed to become the American correspondent of *The*

Round Table. His interest in present world affairs developed and was, of course, greatly stimulated by the war, from the outbreak of which his pen was devoted to the service of the Allied cause. When in 1917 Colonel House organised an office to prepare for the eventual Peace Conference, the study of British dependencies, in particular of Mesopotamia, was entrusted to Beer, who rapidly developed an encyclopædic knowledge on these subjects. A devouring reader of dry official documents, he possessed the extraordinary faculty of never forgetting the smallest details once read. His academic training had given him in a high degree the love of truth and scrupulous conscientiousness of a scholar. On the other hand, his ten years' business training enabled him to avoid the faults of a mere scholar when dealing with practical questions. He combined to an extraordinary degree the virtues of scholarship with those of a man of affairs.

At the end of 1918 he crossed the Atlantic with President Wilson. It was only at Paris that the real dimensions of the man came to be realized by those who worked with him. No man knew better when to speak and when to be silent, when to abstain and when to intervene. By the British, French and Italian delegates he was trusted as implicitly as by his own chiefs. He became, in fact, a sort of tele-

phone exchange through which the various delegations gained access to each other's minds. Extraordinarily steady and detached in his judgment, he was never carried away by the popular prejudices of the moment. He was always accessible, yet it seemed impossible to refer to a document he had not read. When he found time for this reading was a mystery. He must have dedicated very few hours to sleep in Paris, and there can be no doubt that the pace at which he worked brought on or hastened the internal disease which led to his premature death.

Beer was, in the truest sense of the word, an internationally minded man. The fact that his selection as head of the mandates department of the League of Nations was due not to American but British initiative, speaks for itself. He loved his own country, but men of other nations instinctively trusted him to do justice to theirs. He was one of the originators of the idea of an International Institute, the first step in the realisation of which has been recently taken in the foundation of the British Institute of International Affairs. The underlying idea, for which he was largely responsible, was for each country to found an Institute of Foreign Affairs, which would act as a telephone exchange between the few hundred men

in each country who administer foreign affairs and create public opinion on the subject. These national institutes were to be connected by mutual arrangements for reciprocity, so that, to continue the metaphor, the various national institutes were to be connected by trunk lines. This organisation was to produce a history of the Peace Conference, and thereafter an annual survey of foreign affairs. With Lord Eustace Percy he drew out the plan of the history, the first volume of which has now appeared.

But there was also a side to Beer's life of which those who had only known him in England or in Paris could hardly be aware. In his own country his powers of mind, his extraordinary kindliness of character and his generous spirit made him the centre of a considerable group of men upon whom his criticism and advice had a powerful influence. His retiring disposition made him averse to anything in the nature of public speaking, but at a dinner-table those present would often hang upon his words, and he was seen almost at his best on such occasions. And his influence went far beyond the sphere of direct personal intercourse, for his correspondence was large, and he was always willing to take unlimited trouble in assisting people who were, he felt, trying to express thought of some value on

public affairs. There are many men indeed whose names could never appear, who owe a great debt to the stimulus which he supplied either by letters or in quiet talk. Intellectually impatient of "wool," his kindness of heart made him tolerant of much that must have appeared to him to be vainness. Perhaps the greatest tribute to his memory will be the silent mourning of all these people who owe so great an intellectual debt to him.

Beer left behind him a great mass of unpublished work, the continuation of his study of British colonial policy in the eighteenth century and a number of monumental brochures on tropical dependencies prepared for the use of the American delegation. It is greatly to be hoped that means may be found of giving them to the public.

American by birth, training, sympathy and loyalty, his range of knowledge and interest was confined to no single country. To vast knowledge he added an extraordinary detachment and a weighty judgment. He was at the same time the humblest of men and the warmest of friends. He knew and loved a good cigar. He thought so little about himself that he never thought of making the public think about him. By his death in the prime of his amazing powers the world has lost more than it knows.

VI

THE TIMES

(From the London *Times,* April 7, 1920.)

By the premature death of George Louis Beer America has lost one of her foremost historians and publicists, and Britain one of her best friends across the Atlantic.

His first work, published in 1893, on *"The Commercial Policy of England Toward the American Colonies,"* was written as a thesis under the direction of the Faculty of Political Science of Columbia University; it was a distinct contribution to American historiography and won high praise from competent critics, among them Lecky. Although he held the position of Prize Lecturer in European History at Columbia University from 1893-97, Mr. Beer was never an academic historian. More important than his University connexions was the fact that for about ten years after leaving college he gave himself up mainly to mastering the technicalities of business in a large commercial house in New York, an experience which he used to great advantage when in 1903 he definitely chose the career of an historian. He had already during his business years published an important volume on "Cromwell's Policy in its Economic Aspects" (1902). But the next few years were spent in

research among documents, mainly in the Record Office, with the result that from 1907-12 he was able to publish in four substantial volumes the history of the British Colonial System from 1578 to 1765. At the time of his death he had the materials assembled for carrying the series down into the 19th century, although the war had interrupted the completion of this authoritative work. The four volumes already published are "The Origin of the British Colonial System, 1578-1660," published 1908; "The Old Colonial System, 1660-1754," Part I., in two volumes, 1912; "British Colonial Policy, 1754-1765," published 1907. These volumes were awarded in 1913 the first Loubat Prize as the best work published in the English language during the preceding five years on the history, geography, or archæology of America.

Intensive study of British Colonial policy had given Mr. Beer a keen and clear insight into the significance of the British Empire, and in the pre-war days he had interested himself in the work of *The Round Table* for closer relations between England and America, and he contributed regularly a survey of American politics during the war to *The Round Table* in a series of articles which were a genuine contribution to the understanding of a very difficult and intricate subject. This inter-

est also led him to publish in 1917 his "English-Speaking Peoples," a carefully documented and closely reasoned survey of the possibilities of cooperation between England and America and a plea for alliance between the two countries.

In the American Commission to Negotiate Peace at Paris, Mr. Beer was appointed to the position of Colonial Expert for the Delegation. In this capacity his extraordinary grasp of the history and economic problems involved in the Colonial adjustments, soon won for him an influence and standing that were unique among those who had come to the Conference as technical delegates. Endowed with a rare intuitive sense of political and economic realities, and at the same time familiar with every detail of the diplomatic history and the interests involved, Mr. Beer's contribution to the Colonial settlement was of an importance which only future history will be able to appraise. He was the obvious man for the control of that most difficult section of the League of Nations—the Mandate Section—and was appointed to administer it by the Secretary-General, but on account of the abstention of America he was naturally unable to accept. The loss which American historiography suffers from his premature death is small compared with the loss to international affairs. Few men now living could

bring to the solution of international problems such a combination of scholarly analysis, keen insight and correct appraisal of the imponderable forces of history.

These and other remarkable attainments were concealed by a genuine modesty and a shy reserve which only friendship could penetrate, except when, as at Paris, the occasion called for frankness and decisive action. But, even in his firmest moments, he gave no offence. He left those who differed from and those who agreed with him the impression of a singularly able, lovable, and guileless personality.

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